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LETTERS

OF THE LATE

LORD LYTTTELTON.

SECOND EDITION.



L O N D O N :

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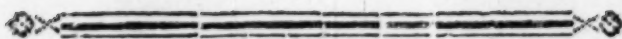
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for their
history of
recognition



THE
INTRODUCTION.

THERE is no species of publication which seems to be more agreeably received than that which illustrates the characters of men distinguished for their abilities, venerable for their erudition, and admired for their virtues. The political history of great men is useful and necessary

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to many; but the domestic history of all men is useful and necessary to all.

Among the materials from whence the biographer forms the volume of domestic Characters, private letters are considered as the most valuable, because they are the most unequivocal authorities of real sentiment and opinion. Conversation is too fugitive to be remembered; public declarations may be oftentimes suspected; but the epistolary communications of friendship may be depended upon as faithful.

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faithful to the mind from whence they arise. The following Letters, therefore, as proceeding from a Nobleman whose great talents promised no small utility to his country, and whose character has been the subject of such general speculation, will, without doubt, meet with a favourable reception.

That they were not written with the most distant idea of being offered to the world, will be evident to every reader; and, surely, no inconsiderable share of merit will be allowed them from

A 3 such

iv INTRODUCTION.

such a circumstance. They may want, perhaps, the correctness and accuracy of prepared compositions; but they possess that easy sincerity, and that open unbosoming of sentiments, which form the charm of epistolary correspondence.

Some liberties have been taken with the Letters at large, by omitting such as alluded to transactions which the world already too well knows, or which it would be shameful to betray. But no alteration has been made in any individual Letter, except
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INTRODUCTION. v

an occasional retrenchment of expressions, which, however common in fashionable life, or unobserved in fashionable conversation, would not justify their being condensed into print, and might give cause of offence to the scrupulous reader.

There may be also some irregularity in the disposition of the Letters: the *thirteenth*, and the *last*, should have an earlier place: but they were already numerically arranged; and, as a precise order does not seem to be material, no alteration of this kind has

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been attempted, which, after all, must have been made upon conjecture.

As these Letters were, in general, without any dates, and not one of them marked with that of the year, it was thought proper to omit them throughout. The *thirtieth* Letter, which appears to have been written the last of the Collection, bears, in the manuscript copy, a conjectural date of the summer of 1775. As it was a matter of particular request, it was thought prudent to suppress the names of those persons

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persons to whom these Letters were addressed : though it is rather natural to suppose, that every reader, who has lived in the world, will form very probable conjectures of them, without any great exercise of thought, or power of divination.

LETTERS

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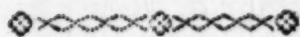
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LETTERS, &c.



LETTER THE FIRST.

My dear Friend,

YOU do me great injustice: I receive your letters with the greatest pleasure; and I gave your last the usual welcome, though every line was big with reproaches to me. I feel myself greatly mortified that
you

you should have a suspicion of any neglect on my part. When I cease to answer your addresses, you will be justified in supposing me careless about them: till then, you will, I hope, do me the justice, as far at least as relates to yourself, to think well of me. I very sensibly feel the advantage of your good opinion, and the loss of it would greatly affect me. You may be assured that my insensibility to reputation is not such as some part of my conduct may have given you reason to believe: for, after all his blustering and looking big, the heart of the worst man cannot be at ease, when he forces a look of contempt towards the ill opinion of mankind.

In

In spite of all his bravadoes, he is an hypocrite twelve hours out of the four and twenty; and hypocrisy, as it is well said, is the homage which Vice pays to Virtue: unwillingly, I confess; but still she is forced to pay it.

I will most frankly acknowledge to you, that I have been as well disposed to turn my back upon the good opinion of the world as any one in it; and that I have sometimes accomplished this important business without confusion of Face, but never without confusion of Heart. On a late very mortifying occasion, it was not in my power to possess myself either with one or the other.

other. At a public and very numerous meeting in the county where my Father lives, where great part of his property lies, where his influence is considerable and his name respectable, I was not only deserted, but avoided; and the women could not have discovered more horror on my approaching them, if I had been *Tarquin* himself. I found myself alone in the croud, and, which is as bad, alone out of the croud. I passed the evening without company; and two or three such evenings would either have driven me to despair or have reformed me. I was then convinced, as I always am when I write to you, that there is some particle of good still remaining in me: but
 I flew

I flew from that solitary scene which gave such a conviction, to renew that dissolute intemperance which would destroy it.

It is a great misfortune, that Vice, be it what it may, will find some one or other to flatter it; and that there should be assemblies of people, where, when public and honourable society has hissed you from the stage, you may find, not only reception, but applause—little earthly *pandemoniums*, where you meet with every means to hush the pains of reflection, and to guard against the intrusions of conscience. It requires a most gigantic resolution to suffer pain, when passion quickens every sense,

sense, and every enticing object beckons to enjoyment. I was not born a Stoic, nor am I made to be a martyr ! So much do I hate and detest pain, ~~that~~ I think all good must be dear that is to be purchased with it. Penitence is a rack where offences have been grievous. To sit alone and court Reflection, which will come perhaps, every moment, with a swinging sin at her back, and to be humble and patient beneath the stripes of such a scourge ; by heavens, it is not in human nature to bear it ! I am sure, at least, it is not in mine.—If I could go to confession, like a good papist, and have the score wiped off at once, *à la bonne heure !*—But to repent like a
 sob-

fobbing, paralytic Presbyterian, will not do for me : I am not fat enough to repent that way. *George Bodens* may be qualified for such a system of contrition ; but my skinny shape will not bear mortification : and, if I were to attempt the subdual of my carnal lust by fasting and prayer, I should be soon fasted and prayed into the family vault, and disappoint the worms of their meals.

I have had, as you well know, some serious conversations with my Father upon the subject ; and one evening he concluded a christian lecture of a most unchristian length, by recommending me to address Heaven to have mercy upon me,

B

and

and to join my prayers to his constant and paternal ones for my reformation. These expressions, with his preceding counsels, and his affecting delivery of them, had such an effect upon me, that, like the King in Hamlet, I had bent the stubborn sinews of my knees, when it occurred to me that my devotions might be seen through the key-hole. This drew me from my pious attitude ; and, having secured this aperture, so unfriendly to secret deeds, I thought it would not be an useless precaution to let down the window-curtains also ; and, during the performance of that ceremony, some lively music, which struck up in the street, caught my attention, and gave

gave a sudden flirt to all my devout ideas : so I girded on my sword, and went to the Little Theatre in the Haymarket, where Mrs. *Cole* and the Reverend Dr. *Squintum* soon put me out of humour with praying, and into humour with myself.

I really began this letter in very sober seriousness; and, though I have strayed from my grave airs into something that wears a ludicrous appearance, I beg of you not to give up all hopes of my amendment. If there were but half a dozen people in the world, who would afford me the kind encouragement I receive from you, it would, I verily believe, work a reformation in the Prodigal :

but the world has marked me down for so much dissoluteness, as to doubt, at all times, of the sincerity of my repentance. — — — has already told me, more than once, that I am got so deep into the mud as to make it highly improbable that I should ever get out ; that I am too bad ever to be good ; and that my future lot is either to be an open villain or an undecieving hypocrite. Pretty encouragement, truly ! Lady *Huntingdon* would tell me another story : but, however that may be, I shall never give myself up for lost, while I retain a sense of your merit, and a value for your friendship. With these sentiments I take my leave, and beg of you to
be

be assured that I am most sincerely yours, &c.

LETTER THE SECOND.

SO ——— turns up his eyes, and significantly shrugs his shoulders, when my name is mentioned ; and, to continue the farce, pretends to lament me as a disgrace to his family. I am almost ashamed to acknowledge it, but this idle history has given me a more stinging mortification than I almost ever felt. How insignificant must he become, who is openly despised by Insignificance ; and how loud must the hiss of the world be, when such a puny
 B 3 whip.

whipster insults me. If honourable men were to speak of me with contempt, I should submit without resentment ; for I have deserved it. If they should bestow their pity upon me, I should thank them for giving me more than I deserve. If mankind despise, I have only to resist or fly from the contempt ; but to be an object of supercilious airs, from one who, two years ago, would have wiped the dust from off my shoes, and who, perhaps, two years hence, will be proud of the same office,—a puny prattler who does not possess a sufficient degree of talent or importance to give dignity either to virtue or crime,—I say, to be the butt of such a one severely mortifies me.

Were

Were I on the other side of the water, his backbiting looks and shrugs should be changed in a moment to well-made bows and suppliant postures. If I live, the scurvy knave shall do me homage ! It really frets me, that I cannot, in four-and-twenty hours, meet him face to face, and make his subservient attentions give the lie to his humbling compassion, in the presence of those before whom he has traduced me. The day of my revenge will come, when he shall open his mouth for me to spit in it, as he was wont to do, and perform every dirty trick for which parasites were formed. His genius is to fetch and carry ; a very spaniel, made to fawn and eat your leavings ;
 whose

whose whole courage rises no higher than to ape a snarl. If I live to outlive this sniffling pedagogue, I shall see him make a foolish end of it. Mark my words,—I am a very *Shylock*,—I will have Revenge!

The last word I have written puts me in mind of telling you that _____ has been with me for some time. The rascal, who is a priest into the bargain, carried *aqua fortis* in a syringe for three months together, to squirt the fiery liquor into the eyes of a fortunate rival. In this diabolical design he succeeded, and the object of his malice was for ever deprived of half his sight. I have conversed with him on the horrors

horrors of this transaction ; but the *Italian* finds a consolation in his own infernal feelings, and a justification in the dying command of his Father, whose last words composed this emphatic sentence,—“*Remember, my son, that Revenge is sweet.*”

This man is capable of any villainy, if money is to be got by it; and I doubt not but he might be bribed to undertake, without hesitation, robbery, seduction, rape, and murder. However, my superior virtue for once overawed his villainy ; for he most certainly had it in his power to have robbed me of a large sum of money, without the possibility of a discovery ; and, if he
thought

thought it necessary , he might have dispatched me with as little danger. I have since asked him what strange fit of virtue, or fear of the devil, came across him, when he had such an opportunity to make his fortune. The impudent rascal replied, at once, that he had very powerful suggestions to send me to the other world ; and that, if, fortunately for him, I had possessed one single virtue, he should, without ceremony, have dispatched me to my reward. This event, I think, will make a compleat Mandivilleian of me. You see, for your encouragement, that a bad life is good for something ; and for the good example which the world will receive from me in
times

times to come, it will be indebted to the very bad one I have already given it.—After this signal and providential preservation, I cannot but think that Heaven has something particularly great in store for me.

As I tell it you, this history has the air of a *badinage* ; but you may be assured that it is a real fact, and I am sorry that the circumstances of it are too long and various to be inserted in a letter. I believe you know something of the man ; but, if you repeat what I have written to any-one who is acquainted with him, you will soon find that I have had a very narrow escape. I have bribed him to leave me, and
he

he is gone for *England*. The story of *Lewis the Fourteenth* and his Barber is well known ; and you may, if you please, apply it to

Your affectionate, &c.

LETTER THE THIRD.

My dear Friend,

YOUR letter, which I received no longer ago than yesterday, would do honour to the most celebrated name among the moral writers of any period. It is the most sensible, easy, and concise history of the Passions I have ever read. Indeed, it has not been my lot to have
given

given any great portion of my time to such studies. These powers have kept me too much in the sphere of their own tumultuous whirlwinds, to leave me the leisure of examining them. I have been, am, and I fear shall be, their sport and their slave; and when I shall acquire that serenity of character which will enable me to examine them with a philosophical scrutiny, I cannot tell. My expectations are at such a distance upon this point, that I am almost ashamed to mention my apprehensions to you. It is, however, treating you with the confidence you deserve, to tell you, that from my soul I think the very source of them must be dried up before they will lose their

their empire over me. In the lively expression of the poet, "they are the elements of life," without which man would be a mass of insensible and unintelligent matter. Now, it is that happy compound of these elementary particles of intellectual life, that you so well describe, so thoroughly understand, and so happily possess, which I despair of attaining. I have the resolution to make resolutions, but it extends no farther; I cannot keep them: and to escape from the misery brought on by one passion, I have so habituated myself to bathe in a branch of the same flood, that I cannot look for any other relief.— You very naturally ask me where
all

all this must end?—I know not!—
 and to similar interrogatories I have
 sometimes madly replied, I care
 not. But I shall not offend you
 with such a declaration; and when
 I am writing to you, I do not feel
 myself disposed to do it. In an-
 swering you, therefore, I shall adopt
 the language of the ruined gamester,
 who addressed his shadow in
 the glass: “*Je vous ai dit et redit,
 Malheureux, que, si vous continuiez
 à faire de pareils tours, vous iriez à
 l’hôpital.*”

You lay great stress upon the
 powers of Reason, and, in truly phi-
 losophical language, heightened by
 the most proper and affecting
 imagery,

imagery, present this sage directress of weak mortals to my attention. I receive her at your hand, respect her as your friend, and venerate her as the cause of your superiority over me : but whether she perceives that my respect is insincere, or remembers how shamefully I have neglected her ; so it is, that she slides insensibly from me, and I see her no more. My bark rides steady for a moment, but it is not long ere it again becomes the sport of winds and billows. But, after all, and without any blasphemous arraignment of the order of Providence, permit me to ask you, why is this principle, implanted in our natures for the wise and happy regulation of them,

them, so weak in itself, so slow in its progress, and so late in its maturity? If it is designed to controul our Passions, why does it not keep pace with them?—wherefore does it not *grow with their growth*, and *strengthen with their strength*?—and what cause can be assigned that the one are ripe for gratification before the other has scarce bursted into blossom? Let us, however, take a long stride from the imbecillity of youth to the firmness of mature age, and we shall see that the Passions have only changed their form; that Reason still totters, is frequently driven from her throne, and even deserts those who have most cultivated her friendship and acknow-
C
ledged

ledged her power. The contest frequently continues through life, and the superiority as often ends, where it always begins, on the side of Passion. We may be said even sometimes to outlive Reason, while Passion of some kind, and, many times, of the worst kind, will preserve its influence to the last. To conclude the matter, how often does the lamp of human Reason become extinct, yielding corporal nature a prey to Passion in the extreme, whose tortures are rendered more fierce by the iron restraints of necessary policy and medical interposition !

If it were possible to trace the course of Reason in the mind of the
 I best

best man that ever lived, from its first budding to a fulness of maturity, what a mortifying scene would be unveiled ! What checks and delays, what tranquillity and tumult, what frequent extinction and renovation, what rapid flights and sudden downfalls, what contest and submission, would compose the operations of this rightful mistress of human actions ! Men of cold tempers, and habituated to reflection, may cry up this distinctive faculty of man ; they may chaunt its apotheosis, and build temples to its honour :—such were Lord Shaftesbury and Mr. Addison ;—and they may be joined by those whose fortunate education and early connections

have given to their warmer dispositions the best objects : in that confined but happy society, I must place my friend, whose kind stars preserved his youth from temptation, and blest his bloom of manhood with the ample and all-satisfying pleasures of virtuous love. You will not suspect me of wishing to diminish the reality of that merit which I so much admire, or of a desire to damp the glow of that virtue whose lustre cannot be diminished by my envy, or heightened by my praise ; but, in the course of human affairs, time and chance have so much to do, that I cannot suppose even your worth to be without some obligations to them.

To

To conclude this very, very long letter, I must beg leave to observe, that I do not understand why *Reason*, that divinity of philosophers, should be cooped up in the confined region of the brain, while the Passions are permitted to range at large, and without restraint, through every other part of the body.—I see you smile;—but be assured that these two jarring powers are, for a moment, both united in me to assure you that I am, with a real sincerity,

Yours, &c.

LETTER THE FOURTH.

I AVAIL myself, Madam, of the very obliging offer you made me of suffering a small parcel to occupy an useless pocket in your coach. It is of some little importance; but if the Custom-house officers at *Dover* should suspect you of being a smuggler of lace, as you certainly are of other and better things, and insist upon examining its contents, I beg you will indulge their curiosity without ceremony. On your arrival in London, when any of your servants should be unemployed, I must desire the additional

ditional favour of its being sent to the place where it is addressed.

I feel myself extremely mortified, that a cold, which forbids me to utter any thing more than a whisper, should have prevented me from offering you my personal wishes for your health and happiness, an agreeable journey, and a safe arrival in England, where your friends will feel a delight in seeing you, which can be only equalled by their regret whom you have left behind. Among the number of them I am not the least sincere ; and, tho' I found your gates but very seldom open for me, I am truly grateful to you for the pleasure I received whenever you

indulged me with the honour of an admittance.

Perhaps your caution, in this particular, proceeded from an ill opinion of me : you might consider me as a person too dangerous to break with openly, or too intruding to trust with familiarity. If so, you have done me wrong, and, what is more, you have done injustice to yourself. There is a dignity in virtue like yours, which commands respect from all ; and the worst of men would be overawed in his approaches to it. Perhaps, Madam, there was also a little compassion mingled with your reserve. You must be conscious of your charms ; but, possessed of an
heart

heart which would find no glory in coquettish triumphs, you did not suffer me to approach you, lest I should be scorched by the beams of that beauty which is sufficient to inflame all, and which you preserve for one. If such humane considerations governed the orders which were given to your *Swiss*, it becomes me to express my grateful sense of your kindness: but, if you acted from motives not so favourable to me, I must lament, as a tenfold misfortune, that you should add another thong to the scourge of injustice.

I believe, in my heart, that your society, and such as I should have met with you, would have been of
great

great use and benefit to me ; and that in being so sparing of your welcomes, you omitted doing a great good. The very business of this letter has made a gloomy mind less gloomy ; and, if I had half a dozen letters to write to half a dozen persons like yourself, if so many could be found in the world, it would make this day, in spite of every unpleasant indisposition, one of the happiest and best of my life. During the future part of it, what of good or honour is destined for me, I cannot tell ; but I shall ever consider it as a very great and most flattering privilege, whenever you will permit me, in any manner, to assure with what real respect

I am, &c. &c.

LETTER THE FIFTH.

OF all the birds in the air, who should have been here but — — — ! I met her in the — — —, where she could not well avoid me, though I saw in her looks a wish to do it. She received me therefore with great politeness; conversed with much ease and vivacity during the walk; and, when I requested permission to wait on her, she granted it, in that sort of manner, which told me, in as strong terms as looks could give, “ You are
 “ very imprudent to risk such a request;
 “ but, as an absolute refusal might
 “ raise conjectures in those about
 “ us

“ us unfavourable to you, I will not
 “ answer you with a denial, and my
 “ gates shall not always be shut against
 “ you. But you will do well to pro-
 “ portion your visits to what you may
 “ naturally conceive to be my desire.”

And she has kept her word. During
 six weeks that she was here, I called
 ten times, and was admitted only
 thrice, when there was a great deal
 of company. This is a very superior
 woman ; for, while she conducts her-
 self in such a manner to me, as to
 tell me plainly that the respect she
 has for my family is the only in-
 ducement to give me the reception
 she does, there is not a single look
 suffered to escape her, from which
 any person might form the most
 distant

distant suspicion of her sentiments concerning me. It is my blab of a conscience that does the business for me;—it is that keen-sighted lynx, which sees things impervious to every other eye: and thus I expose myself to myself, when I appear without spot or blemish to the circle about me.

————— is a very fine woman, a very sensible woman, and, what is more rare, a very rational woman. The three qualities of beauty, talents, and wisdom, which are generally supposed to be incompatible in the same female character, are, however, united in her. There is another circumstance which, though
a rake,

a rake, I cannot but admire, and which the most dissolute respect in others, though they are strangers to it themselves ;—I mean constancy. From the united principles of duty and affection, she is faithful to her husband, who, to say the truth, highly deserves it. Such a woman is capable of making the bad good,—the inconstant stable, and the giddy wife ; and he, who would wish to see what is most perfect and respectable in the female character, would do well to make a pilgrimage to see and converse with her. I was so very much afflicted with a cold, as not to be able to go and hand her to the coach on her departure ; which was a circumstance still more afflict-
ing

ing than the cold : so I consoled myself by writing her a letter, which was half serious, more than half gallant, and almost sincere.

If you could, by any means, discover,—and I should think it would be in your power to do it without much trouble,—whether she has at any time mentioned it, and, if so, in what manner she expressed herself, you would very sensibly gratify the curiosity of,

Your affectionate, &c.

LETTER

LETTER THE SIXTH.

IT is so long since I received your letter, that I am almost ashamed to answer it; and be assured, that, in writing my apology, and asking your pardon, I act with a degree of resolution that I have seldom experienced. I hardly expect that you will receive the one or grant the other: I do not deserve either, or indeed any kindness from you of any sort; for I have been very ungrateful. I am myself very sensible of it, and very much apprehend that you will be of the same opinion. I was never more
conscious

conscious of my follies than at this moment: and, if you should have withdrawn yourself from the very few friends which are left me, I shall not dare to complain; for I deserve the loss, and can only lament that another and a deeper shade will be added to my life. The very idea of such a misfortune is most grievous; and nothing can be more painful than the reflection of suffering it from a fatal, ill-starr'd, and abortive infatuation which will prove my bane. I have written letters, since I received yours, to many who have never done me any kindness; to some who have betrayed me; and to others whose correspondence administered no one comfort to my heart, or ho-

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nour

nour to my character : and for them, at least engaged with them, I have neglected you, to whose disinterested friendship I am so much indebted, and which is now become the only point whereon to fix my anchor of hope.

But this is not all : if it were, I have something within me which would whisper your forgiveness ; for you know of what frail materials I am made, and have ventured, in the face of the world's malice, to prognosticate favourably of my riper life. But I fear that you will think meanness added to ingratitude, when I tell you, that I am called back to acknowledge your past goodness to me, and to ask a repetition of it, not from any renewed

newed sentiments of honour or gratitude, but by immediate and wringing distress. In such a situation your idea presented itself to me ; an idea which was not encouraged in seasons of enjoyment : it never wished to share my pleasure, but, like the first-born of friendship, it hastened to partake my pain. Though it came in so lovely a form, I dared not bid it welcome ; and I started, as at the sight of one whom I had severely injured, whose neglect, contempt, and revenge, I might justly dread, while I did not possess the least means of resistance, nor had a covert left where I might fly for refuge !

This is a very painful confession, and will, I hope, plead my cause in your bosom, and win you to grant my request. I have written to ——— for some time past, and have never been favoured with one line of reply. Indeed, it has been hinted, that he refuses to read my letters. However that may be, he most certainly does not answer them. In order, therefore, that I may know my fate and be certain of my doom, I most earnestly and submissively intreat you to deliver the inclosed letter into his hands. ——— If I should be deserted by you both, the consequences may be of such a nature, as, in the most angry paroxysm,

roxysm, you would, neither of you,
wish to

Your most obliged, &c.

LETTER THE SEVENTH.

My dear —,

I RETURN you all my thanks for
the endeavours you have made
to satisfy the wishes of my last letter.
I am very grateful to you, though
they have proved fruitless. I suppose
she destroyed the paper the moment
she had perused the contents of it.

D 3

Perhaps,

Perhaps, she did not even deign to read it, but delivered it immediately to the flames, as tainted and infectious in coming from so unholy a person as I am. The idea mortifies me. To be treated with contempt is always painful, and more so to those who deserve it, as they have no shelter in themselves to which they can fly for protection : in their own hearts they will find the echo of those sounds against which they shut their ears ; while the good man possesses a shield in his virtue, and returns compassion for injustice. Contempt becomes still more poignant, when it is conducted with a delicacy which does not give you the most momentary opportunity of

of returning it ; when it is so blended with good humour and external decorum, as to let no one see it but the conscious victim.

In this manner did the fair Lady manage the matter with me : she honoured me with every mark of exterior respect ; she suffered no polite attention or civility to escape her ; at the same time, her conduct towards me was so general and equally tempered, that she won me, as it were, by enchantment, into the same mode, and precluded familiarity. I had indeed brought myself to the resolution of making my approaches more nearly, when she immediately discovered my design, and, by asking

some questions about my father, which were wholly unexpected on my part, and connected with some very stinging ideas, she threw me at once to my former distance, dissipated in a moment the impudence I had collected for the occasion, and I have never seen her since.

You have some sportable fancies upon the subject, and you are welcome to them : but for once you are beside the mark ; and, though your incredulity may oppose itself to my assertion, believe me that I have an honest respect for this woman, and it is on that account that I am so severely wounded by her treatment of me. The contempt of half mankind is
not

not worth the smile it occasions: they act from caprice, folly, weakness, envy, or some base motive; they join the vulgar clamour they know not why; and their hiss, though loud, gives not the pain of a moment: but the scorn of good and honourable men is the fruit of conviction; it springs from an aversion to what is contrary to their own excellence, and cannot be retorted. There is no other way of being revenged of them, but in giving the lie to their unfavourable prognostications, by an immediate and complete reformation; and this is a difficulty, my friend, of whose arduous nature you are equally sensible with myself.

—*Facilis descensus Averni,—sed revocare*

care gradum, &c. &c. &c.—The road by contrition to amendment, is humiliating, painful, and difficult; and the greater part of guilty mortals adopt the sentiments of *Macbeth* :

————— I am in blood
Stept in so far, that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as bad as to go o'er.

But to the purpose; I have another commission for you, in which I flatter myself you will be more successful than in your last. You must know, then, I am in a bad plight, and there is no good ground of expectation that matters will go better with me : on the contrary, the prospect is a dark one, and the gloom encreases every step I take. To extricate myself,

self, if possible, I wrote to ———, who has not answered my letters, and, I am disposed to think, never opens them. I was, therefore, under the necessity of addressing a very pitiful, penitential epistle to ———. I have used him scurvily, and made such an ill return to all zeal to serve me, that I have too much reason to apprehend his resentment. He passed through — — about six weeks ago, without enquiring after me. However, without appearing to know any thing of that circumstance, I ventured to tell a miserable tale to him, and to beseech his kindness would once more interest itself in my behalf, by delivering a letter into — — —'s own hands. It would be an easy matter,

matter, I should imagine, to discover if he has complied with my request. T—— will inform if he has been lately, and when, in —— street. Perhaps he may have scented out something more ; and whatever you can discover I should be glad to know with all possible dispatch. They will, probably, be slow in their operations, whatever they may be ; and your information will direct my hopes, or confirm my fears ; will either give a sunshine to the present shade, or prepare me for the worst. Adieu, and believe me

Ever yours, &c.

LETTER

LETTER THE EIGHTH.

YOU accuse me of neglect in not informing you that I was in London. Believe me, I had every disposition in the world to do it, but was opposed by circumstances, which, among other mortifications, prevented me from seeing you. I came to *England* in so private a manner, that I imagined no one would, or, indeed, could know of my arrival: but, by a combination of unlucky circumstances, the secret was discovered, and by those who were the most likely to make a very unpleasant

fant use of their knowledge. I was, therefore, obliged to shift my plan, and to beg H— — to give me an asylum in his house, where he very kindly received and entertained me. My abode was not suspected by any one; and I remained there till certain people were persuaded that I had never left the Continent, or was again returned to it; and till the hell-hounds, which were in pursuit of me, had relaxed their search.

You must, certainly, have heard me mention something of my Host and Hostess: they are the most original couple that ever were paired together; and their singularity effected what, I believe, no other amusement could
have

have attained ;—it made me forget the disagreeableness of my situation. He possesses a strange, wild, rhapsodic genius, which, however, is not uncultivated ; and, amid a thousand odd, whimsical ideas, he produces original bursts of poetry and understanding that are charming. She is a foreigner, assumes the title of Countess, and, without knowing how to write or read, possesses, in the circumstance of dress, behaviour, &c. all her husband's dispositions. She is fantastic, grotesque, outrée, and wild ; nevertheless, at times, there are very pleasing gleams of propriety in her manners and appearance.

I can-

I cannot describe so well as you may conceive the striking and odd contrast of these two characters; and what strange sparks are produced by the collision of them. When she imagines that Cytherea acknowledges her divinity, and he grasps in his hand the lyre of Apollo; when the goddess unfolds herself to view with imaginary millions at her feet, and when the god chides the chairs and tables for not being awakened into a cotillion by his strains; in short, when the sublime fit of madness is on, it is an august scene: but, if the divinities should rival each other, heaven changes instantly to hell, Venus becomes a trull, and Phœbus a blind fidler. It is impossible

possible to describe the riot ; not only reflections, but things of a more solid nature are thrown at each other. Homer's genius is absolutely necessary to paint celestial combats. But it ends not here : this superb opera, which was acted, at least, during my stay, three times a week, and rehearsed generally every day, for the most part, has an happy conclusion. The contest requires the support of nectar, which softens the edge of resentment, puts the parties in good-humour, and they are soon disposed to acknowledge each other's merit and station with a zeal and fondness superior, if possible, to their late rage and opposition. A number of collateral circumstances serve as in-

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terludes

terludes to the grand piece, and, though less sublime, are not less entertaining.

You will now, probably, be no longer displeased with me for making my hiding-place a secret. One hour's attendance upon our orgies would have done for you: on the contrary, they suited me. I wanted something to hurry my spirits, to dissipate my thoughts, and amuse my mind; and I found it in this retreat. You know enough of the parties to enter into my description. I hope it will make you laugh; but, if my pen should fail, I will promise to make your sides ach when we meet again; a pleasure which I look to
with

with a most sensible impatience. I
remain,

Yours most truly, &c.

LETTER THE NINTH.

SINCE the little snatch of pleasure I enjoyed with you, I have been again obliged to make my retreat: I had made good my ground, in my own opinion, but the devil that is in me would not suffer me to maintain it. There is a proverb of *Zoroaster* to the following effect,—

“ That there are an hundred oppor-
E 2
tunities

tunities of doing ill every day, but that of doing well comes only once a year." There is some wit and much truth in the observation. The wise man was led to make it, I suppose, from the circumstances of the times wherein he lived; and, if it had been his lot to breathe in these latter days, he would be equally justified in forming and applying such an opinion; and, perhaps, in every intervening period. Indeed, if I may judge from my own experience, matters are still growing worse; for I never fail to find the *daily* opportunities, but the *annual* one has ever escaped me.

There is nothing so miserable, and,
I may

I may add, so unfortunate, as to have nothing to do ! The peripatetic principle, that Nature abhors a *vacuum*, may be applied, with great propriety, to the human intellect, which will embrace any-thing, however criminal, rather than be without an object. It is a matter of indubitable certainty with me, that, if I had kept my seat in Parliament, most of the unpleasant predicaments in which I have been involved since that time would have been avoided. I was disposed to application in the political line, and was possessed of that ready faculty of speech which would have enabled me to make some little figure in the senate. I should have had employment ; my

passions would have been influenced by a proper, animating object, and my vanity would have been sufficiently satisfied. During the short time I sat in Parliament, I found myself in the situation I have described : I was pleased with the character ; I availed myself of its privileges while I possessed them ; I mingled in public debate, and received the most flattering testimonies of applause. If this scene had continued, it would have been very fortunate for myself, and have saved my friends great anxiety, and many alarms : you, among the rest, would have been spared the pain of much unavailing counsel, and disregarded admonition.

You

You know me well enough to be certain that I must have a particular and not a common object to employ my attention : it must be an object which inspires desire, calls forth activity, keeps hope upon the stretch, and has some sort of high colouring about it. Power and popular reputation are of this kind, and would greatly have engrossed my thoughts and wishes ; they would have kept under the baser passions : I should have governed them at least, and my slavery, if I was destined to be a slave, would have been more honourable. But, losing a situation so suitable to me, I fell back a prey to that influence which had already proved so fatal, and yielded myself

a victim to an habitual dissoluteness which formed my only pleasure.

I do not mean to write a disrespectful thought of my father ; I would not offend you by doing it ; but, surely, his ignorance of mankind is beyond all conception. It is hardly credible that a man of his understanding and knowledge, whose life has been ever in the world, and the most polished societies of it, who writes well and ably on its manners, should be so childish in its concerns as to deserve the coral that amused and the go-cart that sustained him sixty years ago. I write in confidence ; and you know what I assert to be true. Indeed, I might go further,

ther, and trace the errors of my own life from the want of that kind of paternal discernment which sees into the character of his child, watches over its growing dispositions, gently moulds them to his will, and completes the whole by placing him in a situation suitable to him.

I have been the victim of vanity ; and the sacrifice of me was begun before I could form a judgment of the passion. You will, probably, understand me ; but, if there should be the least gloom in my allusions, I will, with your leave, explain the matter further in some future letter. There is a great deal of difference
between

between a good man and a good father : I have known bad men who excelled my father as much in parental care as he was superior to them in real virtue.—But more of this hereafter. In the mean time, and at all times, I am, &c.

LETTER THE TENTH.

YOU have, certainly, given yourself very unjustifiable airs upon my subject: neither your talents, knowledge, figure, courage, or virtue, afford you the shadow of that superiority

superiority over me, which, I understand, you affect to maintain. However imprudent or bad my conduct may have been, whatever vices I may unfortunately possess, be assured I do not envy you your sniveling virtues, which are worse than the worst vices, and give an example of meanness and hypocrisy in the extreme. Your letter is a *farrago* of them both ; and since the receipt of it I despise you more than ever.

What, Sir ! has my father got a cough, or does he look thinner than usual, and read his Bible ? There must be some certain symptom of his decay and dissolution that could induce you to address yourself so
kindly

kindly to one, who, to use your own expression, is, as he ought to be, abandoned by his family. You have dreamed of an hatchment upon — House, and seen a visionary coronet suspended over my brow. You are a simpleton and a parasite to let such weak reasons guide you to wag your tail and play the spaniel, and renew your offers to fetch and carry. Be assured, for your comfort, that, if ever you and I have any future intercourse together, it will be upon such terms, or worse.

I have heard it said, and I believe it to be true, that you pretend to lament your poor — —'s fate, and, with a more than rueful visage,
 prog-

prognosticate the breaking of his heart from the wicked life of his graceless son. Now, I will tell you a secret, that, supposing such a canting prophecy should take place to-morrow, you would be the first to flatter the *parricide*. I consider you with a mixture of scorn and pity, when I see you so continually hampered in difficulties from your regard to the present and future Lord : though you order your matters tolerably well ; for there is not one of our family to whom your hypocritical canting will not answer in some measure, but to myself. I know you, and I declare you to be incapable of any love or affection to any-one, even to a mother or a sister. You know

know what I mean ; but, to quit an idea abhorrent to human nature, let me entreat you, if it is in your power, to act with candour, and, if you must speak of me, tell your sentiments openly, and not with those covert looks, and affected shrugs, which convey so much more than meets the ear : and be so good, I pray you, as to raise your merit upon your own mighty stock of virtues, and not upon my vices. The world will one day judge between us, and I must desire you to be content with the acknowledged superiority you will receive from the arbitration in your favour.

*Oh, stultum nimis est, cum tu pravissima tentes,
Alterius censor ut vitiosa notes.*

I have

I have not yet fung a requiem to my own honour ; and, though you and some others of my good friends may have chaunted a dirge over the grave you have yourselves dug for it, it does not rest, however, without the hopes of a joyful and speedy resurrection. To have done with you for the present, I have only to desire you to be an open enemy to me, or a real friend, if you are capable of either : the halting between two opinions on the matter is both disgraceful and contemptible. Be assured that I give you these counsels more for your own sake than for that of,

Your humble servant, &c.

LETTER

LETTER THE ELEVENTH.

My dear Sir,

YOU wish that I should explain myself at large with respect to that vanity which I accuse of having been the cause of every inconvenience and misdoing of my past life, to which I owe the disagreeable circumstances of my present situation, and shall be indebted, probably, for some future events which, I fear, are in store for me.

You will, I believe, agree with me that vanity is the foible of my family :

family: every individual has a share of it for himself and for the rest; they are all equally vain of themselves, and of one another. It is not, however, an unamiable vanity: it makes them happy, though it may sometimes render them ridiculous; and it never did an injury to any-one but to me. I have every reason to load it with execration, and to curse the hour when this passion was concentrated to myself.

Being the only boy and hopes of the family, and having such an hereditary and collateral right to genius, talents, and virtue, (for this was the language held by certain persons at that time,) my earliest

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prattle

prattle was the subject of continual admiration : as I encreased in years, I was encouraged in boldness, which partial fancy called manly confidence; while fallies of impertinence, for which I should have been scourged, were fondly considered as marks of an astonishing prematurity of abilities. As it happened, Nature had not been a niggard to me ; it is true, she has given me talents, but accompanied them with dispositions which demanded no common repressure and restraint, instead of liberty and encouragement : but this vanity had blinded the eyes not only of my relations, but also of their intimate connections ; and, I suppose, such an hot-bed of flattery was never before used

used to spoil a mind, and to choak it with bad qualities, as was applied to mine. The late Lord Bath, Mrs. — — —, and many others, have been guilty of administering fuel to the flame, and joined in the family incense to such an idol as myself. Thus was I nursed into a very early state of audacity; and being able, almost at all times, to get the laugh against a father, or an uncle, &c. I was not backward in giving such impertinent specimens of my ability. This is the history of that Impudence which has been my bane, gave to my excesses such peculiar accompaniments, and caused those, who would not have hesitated to commit the offence, loudly to con-

demn the mode of its commission
in me.

When I drew towards manhood,
it will be sufficient to say, that I began to have some glimmering of the family weakness: however, I was still young; dependence was a considerable restraint, and I had not acquired that subsequent knowledge of the world which changed my notions of paternal authority. I was, therefore, without much difficulty, brought to consent to the design of giving solidity to my character, and preserving me from public contagion, by marriage. A rich and amiable young Lady was chosen to the happy and honourable task of securing

curing so much virtue as mine, to correct the natural exuberance of youthful inexperience, and to shape me into that perfection of character which was to verify the dreams of my visionary relations.

I must own that the Lady was both amiable and handsome, but cold as an anchorite; and, though formed to be the best wife in the world to a good husband, was by no means calculated to reclaim a bad one. But, to complete the sensible and well-digested plan in which so many wise heads were concerned, it was determined for me to make the tour of Europe, previous to my marriage, in order to perfectionate my

F 3 matrimo-

matrimonial qualifications ; and the lovely idea of the fair maid I left behind was presented to me, as possessing a talismanic power to preserve me from seduction. But this was not all : for the better enabling me to make a proper and becoming appearance, or in other words, to give me every means of gratification, the family purse was lavishly held forth ; I was left almost without controul, in point of expence, and every method pursued to make me return the very reverse of what expectation had painted me. — You know as well as myself what happened during my travels, as well as after my return, and I trust that you will impute my misconduct, in part at least, to its primary cause.

In this short sketch of the matter, which consists rather of hints than descriptions, you will see the drift of my reasoning, and know how to apply it to a thousand circumstances in your remembrance. You were present at my being received into the arms of my family with a degree of warmth, delight, and triumph, which the brightest virtue could alone have deserved; and you recollect the cause of all this rapturous forgiveness, which, I believe, penitence itself would not, at that time, have effected: it was my having made a speech in Parliament, flowery, indeed, and bold, but very little to the purpose; and at a time when, as I was certain that I should

lose my seat, it would have been prudent in me to have remained silent : however, Mr. Ellis thought proper to compliment me upon the occasion, and to observe, that I spoke with hereditary abilities ; and this circumstance instantly occasioned the short-lived family truce that succeeded.

That my relations may have cause to complain of me, I do not deny ; but this confession is accompanied with an opinion, in which I doubt not of your acquiescence, that I, on my side also, have no small cause of complaint : and, however black the colour of my future life may be, I shall ever consider that the dusky scenes

Scenes of it are occasioned by the vanity of my family, and not by any obdurate or inflexible dispositions inherent in my own character. I am, with great regard,

Yours, &c.

LETTER THE TWELFTH.

My dear —,

IF you had been at all explicit with me about the *Arabian Courser*, he should, most certainly, have been at your service. Notwithstanding he was the gift of *Hymen*, to whom I have

have so few obligations, the animal was a favourite, and I brought him to the continent with me, where he was very troublesome and very useless. But he troubles me no more; and a little ridiculous event, which happened a few weeks ago, made me hate and detest him. If there had been any laughers, the laugh would have been very much against me on the occasion: as it was, I felt and looked so foolish, that I never afterwards could turn a favourable eye upon the beast that was the cause of my mortification.

I shall not give you an account of this little history; for, as I am the principal hero of it, I shall not tell
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it well : so I resign the task to P—. When you see him, therefore, question him upon the subject, and he will do it justice. He is a most lively, good-humoured, and pleasant man, who bears the ills of life as if they were blessings, and seems to take the rough and the smooth with an equal countenance. This sort of unbended philosophy is the best gift that Nature can bestow on her children ; it lightens the burden of care, and turns every fable and ghastly hue of melancholy to bright and splendid colours. There is no one I envy so much as I do P— : a cap and bells is a crown to him ; a tune upon a flageolet is a concert ; if the sun shines, he sports himself
in

in its beams ; if the storm comes, he skips gaily along, and when he is wet to the skin, it only serves to make out a pleasant story while he is drying himself at the fire. If you are dull after dinner, he will get him up and rehearse half a dozen scenes out of a play, and do it well ; and be as pleased with his performance as you can be. With all these companionable talents, he is neither forward, noisy, or impertinent ; but, on the contrary, very conversable, and possesses as pleasant a kind of good breeding as any one I ever knew.

His company has been a great relief to me, and I recommend you to cultivate his acquaintance as an enter-

entertaining and agreeable companion. You and I, my dear Friend, are differently, and, I must add, less happily framed. We are hurried about by every gust and whirlwind of passion; and, tho' Hope does throw a pale gilding upon our disappointments, Fear never fails to interrupt our pleasures.—I would give more than half of what I shall ever be worth to be blessed with a moiety of P—'s temper and disposition.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER THE THIRTEENTH.

My dear Friend,

I BEG your pardon, and plead guilty to the crime laid to my charge ! The Dialogues which you have seen were written by me, on hints given me by an infidel Frenchman at *Turin* *. That it was a folly, to say no worse, to amuse myself with such compositions, I readily acknowledge : nor am I less disposed

* These Dialogues are too irreverent and profane to justify a publication. The personages of the first are the *Saviour of the World* and *Socrates* ; and of the second, *King David* and *Cæsar Borgia*.

to

to own that it was the weakest of all vanities to disperse any copies of them. Your suspicion of their having been composed, in an evil hour, as a ridicule upon those which have been published by my father, is a natural one; but, believe me, it is not founded in fact. Bad as they may be, they were not writ for so bad a purpose; and, if I had considered the possibility of such an idea becoming prevalent, they would never have been exposed to any inspection. I wrote them originally in French, and never, to my recollection, gave them an English dress, but when I read them accidentally to some-one who did not understand the former language. I was flattered

tered into the suffering of some copies to be taken by the declaration of a respectable literary company, that they were superior to *Voltaire's* Tragedy of *Saul*; and these copies must have been greatly multiplied to have made it possible that one of them should have reached you. I am very sorry for it; for you have already more than sufficient reason to fill your letters to me with reproaches; and I curse the chance that has thrown another motive in your way to continue a train so disagreeable to us both.

It is true, that my father is a christian, and has given an ample testimony of his faith to the world
by

by his writings: but it was long after he attained to my age that he became a convert to that system which he has defended. It is painful in me, and hardly fair in you, to occasion our being brought together in the same period: it takes from me the means of justification where I could use them, and of palliation where a complete defence might not be practicable. As to my Right Reverend uncle, I shall consider him with less ceremony. He also may be a good christian; but I recollect to have heard him make a better discourse upon the *outside* ornaments of an old Gothic pulpit, I think it was at *Wolverhampton*, than he ever delivered *in* one, throughout

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the whole course of his evangelical labours. He seems much more at home in a little harangue on some doubtful remnant of a *Saxon* tombstone, than in urging the performance of Christian duties, or guarding, with his lay Brother, the Christian fortress against infidel invasion. I well remember also to have heard his Right Reverence declare that he would willingly give one of his fingers, *that was his expression*, to have a good natural History of *Worcestershire*. What holy ardor he may possess as an *Antiquarian* I cannot tell; but, in my conscience, I think he would make a sorry figure as a *Christian Martyr*, and that a zeal for our holy religion would

would not enflame him to risk the losing of a nail from his finger.

I repeat to you, upon my honour, that I did not wish these *jeux d'esprit* should have gone beyond the limits I had prescribed for them. The very few persons to whom I gave them were bound, by a very solemn promise, not to circulate their contents, or to name their author. If they have forfeited their word, I am sorry for it ; but the failure of their engagement cannot be imputed to me, and the severest judge would not think me guilty of more than *chance-medley* on the occasion. In your breast, I hope, there is a complete and full acquittal for,

Your most sincere and obliged, &c.

LETTER THE FOURTEENTH.

My dear —,

I CANNOT bring it within the compass of my belief, that H— has escaped your recollection. However, I shall be able to restore it to its proper tone in a moment, by mentioning an ode addressed by him to me on the subject of Gaming. You admired it too much to have forgot the author ; and it now occurs to me, that you, or some-one in the company, rehearsed on the occasion a long string of laughable *Eton* and *Oxford* anecdotes concerning him : nay, the very last time we

we were together, you sarcastically repeated to me some of his vaticinations on my impetuous attachment to play, and kindly foretold the completion of them. After all, I believe you are either laughing at me, or pretending ignorance of my bard, in order to have an hash of the same dish which you are pleased to say delighted you so much in my last letter.

Was it not you, or do I dream ?
—who was so charmed with that part of his poem where he describes my being so reduced by gaming as to be obliged to sell H—, and supposes the estate to be bought by the descendant of some felon who was

reprieved from death to transportation by my *ancestor the Judge*, whose picture he tears down from the wall, as a sight disgusting to him. I am not certain as to the correctness of my recollection, but the lines are, I believe, to the following effect :

Shall some unfeeling stranger reign

Within that blest domain ?

*Some Convict's spawn, by thy forefather's
breath,*

Perchance, reprieved from death ;

*Whilst thou, self-banish'd, self-enslav'd,
shalt roam,*

Without a friend or home !

*—Still shall he tremble at the Judge's
frown,*

And, fraught with spite, tear down,

*From the repining wall, his venerable
shade, &c.*

It is a composition of great merit; and, if he was so fortunate as to possess a sense of harmony, he would almost put an end to the present vacation of poetry and poets. His thoughts are original, bold, and nervous; his images apt, lively, and beautiful; his language is never puerile, but sometimes low, and sometimes inflated. If his taste was improved, and he had an ear for versification, which I think he has not, his compositions would be delightful, and, as I have already observed, place him in the first rank of modern poets. P—s, I believe, sometimes visits him, and will most willingly present you à *Monsieur* and *Madame*, if you make known your

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wishes

wishes to him.—A letter from me would shut his door against you : my former favour was never equal to my present disgrace ; and, if you wish to be well in that quarter, you must not acknowledge the least regard for me. Indeed, you would do well never to mention the name of,

Your affectionate, &c.

LETTER

LETTER THE FIFTEENTH.

AND I awoke, and behold I was a Lord ! It was no unpleasant transition, you will readily believe, from infernal dreams and an uneasy pillow, from insignificance and dereliction, to be a Peer of Great Britain, with all the privileges attendant upon that character, and some little estate into the bargain. My sensations are very different from any I have experienced for some time past. My consequence, both internal and external, is already greatly elevated ; and the *empressement* of the people about me is

is so suddenly encreased as to be ridiculous. By heavens ! my dear — —, we are a very contemptible set of beings ; and so on.

Without meaning any-thing so detestable as a pun, I shall certainly *lord* it over a few of those who have looked disdain at me. My coronet shall glitter scorn at them, and insult their low souls to the extreme of mortification. I have received a letter from — —, that dirty parasite, full of condolence and congratulation, with a *my Lord* in every line, and *your Lordship* in every period. I will make the rascal lick the dust ; and, when he has flattered me till his tongue is parched with lies, I
will

will upbraid him with his treason, and turn my back upon him for ever. There are a score of bugs, or more, of the same character, whom the beams of my prosperity will warm into servility, and whose names will be left at my door before I have been ten days in town : but may eternal ignominy overtake me, if I do not make the tenderest vein in their hearts ach with my reproach ! Whether the world will be converted into respect towards me, I do not pretend to determine ; its anger will, at all events, be soothed : but, be that as it may, I can look it in the face with less fear than I was wont to do, and make it smile upon my political career, though

though it may still hold a frowning aspect towards my moral character.

Permit me, however, to assure you, that, whatever change may appear in me towards others, I shall ever be the same to you. The acquisition of fortune, and an elevation to honours, will not vary a line in my regard to those whose friendship has been so faithful to me as yours has been; nor shall you ever have cause to repent of your assiduous kindness to me. There is a balance in the human passions, and the mind that is awake to a spirit of Revenge is equally inspired by the sentiments of Gratitude. There is a dirty crew who shall experience
the

the former, while you may confide in my solemn assurance to you of a most ample exertion of the latter.

A propos ; I must beg of you to forward the enclosed letter to — — —. With much difficulty I persuaded her some time ago to return to England; and I am apprehensive she may be already in town, expecting my arrival. If it be possible, contrive some means to free me from her persecutions, both for her sake and my own. Should she be come to London, you will know where to find her: make any promises you may think necessary in my name, and use every reason your imagination can suggest, to persuade
her

her to return into the country.—You understand me.

— — and — — — are gone from hence this morning, to indulge their fancies in the business of cold iron, and powder, and ball. I was very near being hampered in the affair; but my sable suit and funeral duties excused me from the employment, and I suppose the first news I shall hear of the event will be in England; where I hope shortly to see and embrace you. In the mean time, believe me,

Most sincerely yours, &c.

LETTER

LETTER THE SIXTEENTH.

My dear Friend,

YOUR letter reached me with a large packet of others which my father's death had occasioned. How altered is the language of them upon the occasion ! Yours, indeed, is exactly the same, or, if any thing, bears the tincture of more than usual severity. Flattery is a strain altogether new to me, and by the two last posts I have had enough to surfeit the most arrant coquette upon earth. It is true, I cannot compliment your letter with possess-
ing

ing an atom of adulation; nevertheless, it is the only one which has given me real pleasure, because it is the only one which bears the characters of real friendship. Though I have acted in such a direct opposition to your cautions and remonstrances, I am not the less sensible to that generous passion which produced them, and has now taken the first opportunity to give me the essence, as it were, of all your former counsels, in thus calling my attention to real and permanent honour. However I may offend you hereafter, you shall never again have cause to reproach me with a forfeiture of my word. I have, at present, lost that confidence in myself, which would justify

justify me in offering assurances to you: the hopes of regaining it, however, are not entirely vanished, and when they are fulfilled, which, I trust, they will one day be, you shall receive the first-fruits of my renovation.

I understand the purpose of your observation, that the generality of men employ the first part of life in making the remainder of it miserable. I feel its force, and consider it as an indirect caution to me not to pursue a conduct which must be attended with such a lamentable consequence. But, alas! *credula turba sumus*; though I have paid dearly for my credulity, unless it should

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be immediately followed by the fruits of a wholesome experience. We despise the world when we know it thoroughly; but we give ourselves up to it before we know it, and the heart is frequently lost before it is illuminated by the irradiations of reason.

I have now succeeded to the possession of those privileges which are a part, and perhaps the best part, of my inheritance. Clouds and darkness no longer rest upon me. My exterior of things is totally changed; and, however unmoved some men's minds may be by outward circumstances, mine is not composed of such cold materials

as

as to be unaffected by them. Such an active spirit as animates my frame, must have objects important in their nature, inviting in their appearance, and animating in their pursuit. No longer forced to drown the sensibility to public disgrace and private inconvenience in *Circean* draughts, my character, I trust, will unfold qualities which it has not been thought to possess, and finally dissipate the kind apprehensions of friendship.

My natural genius will now have a full scope for exertion in the line of political duty ; and I am disposed to flatter myself, that the application necessary to make a respectable

figure in that career, will leave me but little time for those miserable pursuits, which, of late, have been my only resource. But I must desire you not to expect an instant conversion; the æra of miracles is passed, and, besides, the world would suspect its sincerity. It is true, I am sinner sufficient to call down the interposition of Heaven, but the present age has no claim to such celestial notices. My amendment must be slow and progressive, though, I trust, in the end, sincere and effectual. But be assured, that, however the completion of your good wishes for me may be deferred, I am perfectly sensible that there is something necessary besides title, rank,

rank, and fortune, to constitute true —
honour.—With this sentiment I take
my leave of you, and am, with real
truth,

Yours, &c.

LETTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

My dear —,

I AM at an inn, and alone ; and, if
you were to guess for ten years,
and had one of *Osborne's* Catalogues
to assist you, sure I am that you would
not divine the book which has amused
my evening, and given a subject to
this letter : nay, I may venture to

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tell

tell you, it is poetical, and still bid defiance to your penetration.

My two travelling volumes had been read twice in the course of my journey, and, as it would not be worth the trouble to unpack a trunk for more, I desired the waiter to ask his mistress to send me a book ; and in the interim I amused myself with fancying what kind of publication would be brought me, resolving however, if it should be the *Pilgrim's Progress*, the *Whole Duty of Man*, or even the Holy Bible, to make it the subject of my evening's lucubrations. The waiter returned, and desired to know if I chose prose or verse. This I thought looked well, and my preference

ference being declared for the latter, I was, in a few minutes, presented with a small volume, which I found to be a Presbyterian hymn-book, entitled *Horæ Lyricæ*, by a Dr. Watts. My expectations were a little chagrined upon the occasion: however, I turned over a few pages, looking cursorily at the contents in my way, when I dropped upon a little odd composition, the subject of which was no less singular than applicable to myself. The title of it was, *Few Happy Matches*.—From the character of the author, who was a dissenting minister, I had conceived that the reasons of matrimonial infelicity would be trite, whining, and scriptural, and that I should find some

bouncing anathemas against such offenders as your humble servant : but it turned out quite otherwise ; the idea is a fanciful one ; and I dare affirm, that, if *Apollo* and the *Nine Muses* had racked their brains for a twelvemonth, they could not have hit upon such a conceit.

The poet supposes that human souls come forth in pairs of male and female from the hands of the Creator, who gives them to the winds of heaven to bear them to our lower world, where, if they arrive safe and meet again, they instinctively impel the bodies they animate towards each other, so as to produce an Hymeneal union, which,

which, being originally designed by their Author, must be necessarily happy : but, as from the length of the way, and the many storms, &c. that check and come across it, they are generally separated before they reach their destination, their re-union is very rare ; and the forming an alliance with any other but the original counterpart, being, as it were, an extraneous connection, must be necessarily miserable, and will produce those jarrings and contentions which so generally disturb matrimonial life. This ingenious fancy will make you smile; nor would the ideas which occur to me on the subject re-brace your muscles, if I had paper or time to bear me out in them.

They

They must serve for another opportunity.—Thus, according to my good Doctor Watts, matches are made in heaven, but marriages on earth. I should think some of them have been fabricated in—— *

*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*	*	*
*	*	but no more of that.			

I really feel myself much indebted to this Pindaric Presbyterian for setting my conscience at rest, which, now and then, had a momentary qualm on a certain subject. The
unlucky

unlucky counterpart, which accompanied my soul from Heaven's gates, was tossed in some whirlwind, driven by some lightning, or detained by some aerial frost, and, at length, I suppose, cast ashore among the antipodes. We are not destined, I believe, to meet again: and I fear, poor soul! if I may judge from myself, that her lot is a very lamentable one, wherever it may be.

After all that sentimental talkers and sentimental writers may produce upon the subject, marriage must be considered as a species of traffick, and as much a matter of commerce as any commodity that fills the warehouse of the merchant. We
exchange

exchange passion for passion, beauty, titles, &c. for money, youth for age, and so on. The business may sometimes answer ; but there are few examples, I fear, when the profit and loss come to be stated, where the balance is considerable in favour of the former. Who, says the Spanish proverb, has ever seen a marriage without fraud, if beauty be a part of the portion ? This idea will hold good in every other instance, and corroborates my principle of its being a matter of trade, which has its foundation in fraud and tricking. One marries for connections, another for wealth, a third from lust, a fourth to have an heir, to oblige his parents, and so on. Every one of your married

ried friends will come under these or similar descriptions, except Lord C——, who married his Lady, as he buys his buckles, because she was the *Ton* ; and, I doubt not, but he was compleatly miserable, that he could not change her, as he does his buckles, for the fashion of the next spring, or, perhaps, the next month.

Plato was at a loss under what class to rank women, whether among brutes or rational creatures : Doctor *Watts's* ideas are far more favourable to the sex, for he has not hesitated to give them celestial natures. I must acknowledge that I have my doubts upon the subject. *Mabometanism*

tanism has, certainly, some fine points about it: give him wine, and a *Turk's* life is not a bad one. So good night to you!—

LETTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

YOUR string of modern wits is not worth a beadsman's rosary. The æra of wit is passed. There are not half a score of men in the kingdom who deserve that title; and the rising world give no hopes of its restoration. The tree that bears such fruit

fruit is blasted. Do me the favour, I beseech you, to distinguish between a man of wit, and one who makes you laugh. The repetition of an old tale, a grimace, a blunder, the act of laughter in another, or even a serious look, may cause the muscular convulsion; but wit is not levelled so much at the muscles as at the heart, and the latter will sometimes smile when there is not a single wrinkle upon the cheek.

How it could ever enter into your head to think *Chase Price* a Wit, puzzles and perplexes me. He has no more pretensions to it than he has to Grace. He is a good-humoured, jolly buffoon, that writes a bawdy song, and sings it; says things that
nobody

nobody but himself would chuse to say, and does things that nobody besides would chuse to do. Believe me, that *Chase's fort* is Politics, not public, but private politics; the science of which he understands better, and practises with more success, than any man in Great Britain. He is never without a point in view, or a game to play; and he never sings a song, or tells a smutty tale, without some design. Mere amusement to himself or others is not Mr. Price's plan: his humour has been a good fortune to him; and he will contrive, I doubt not, to make it last as long as himself. Do you think, when *Bolingbroke, Swift, Arbuthnot, Pope, &c. &c.* were assembled together,
that

that the conversation of such a bright constellation of men was like the ribaldry of Mr. Price. Their wit did not consist in roaring a bawdy catch, &c. ; it was the feast of reason, and the flow of soul. The flashes of imagination adorned and gave brilliance to the high discourse : Wisdom was enlivened, and not wounded, by their wit ; and, among them, the herd of laughter-loving fools would not have found a single grin to console them.—If I were to sing one of Mr. Price's ballads, or to repeat one of his stories, you would receive, I fear, but little pleasure from the exhibition, because I could not give them the accompaniments of noise and grimace, which

I form

form their principal merit: and, perhaps, besides my deficiency in acting my part, I might produce the entertainment an hour too soon. But wit may be repeated by any one at any time, and, I believe, in almost any language, with satisfaction and success: time may drown it in oblivion, but cannot alter its nature: as long as it is remembered it will please; while the facetious exhibitions of a boon companion will scarce survive his funeral.— But to proceed in your catalogue.

Lord C— —e's wit, as well as that of his friend, lies in his heels, and is so powerfully exerted in producing *entre-chats*, as to be languid
to

to every other purpose. A few school-boy rhimes confer not the laurel of wit; and it was a great proof of an opposite character, in this Nobleman, to give his compositions to the world. He may understand French and Italian, and, perhaps, speak both those languages tolerably well: it is probable, also, that he may not have forgot everything he learned at school; but indeed, indeed, my friend, he is no Wit.

Charles Fox is highly gifted; his talents are of a very superior nature: and, in my opinion, *Fitzpatrick* is scarcely behind him: in the article of colloquial merit, he is, at least,

his equal : but they neither of them possess that Attic character, which, while it corrects, gives strength to imagination, and, while it governs, gives dignity to wit. The late *Earl of Bath*, and *Mr. Charles Townshend*, were blessed with no inconsiderable share of it : and it is an intemperate vivacity of genius which confounds it in *Mr. Edmund Burke*. But the man who is in the most perfect possession of it, has figured in so high a line of public life, as to prevent the attention of mankind from leaving his greater qualities to consider his private and domestic character : I mean *Lord Chatbam*, whose familiar conversation is only to be excelled by his public eloquence. Perhaps

haps Lord Mansfield was born, if I may use the expression, with every Attic disposition ; but the shackles of a law education and profession, and some other circumstances which I need not mention, have formalized, and, in some degree, repressed the brilliance of his genius. With respect to this great man, I cannot but pathetically apostrophize with Pope,

“ How sweet an *Ovid* was in *Murray* lost !”

George Selwyn is very superior to *Chase Price*, but very inferior to *Charles Townshend*, against whom, however, he used, as I am told, continually to get the laugh : but this proves nothing ; for good-humoured *George Bodens* would have gained the

prize from them both in the article of creating laughter. I may be wrong, perhaps, but it has ever appeared to me that Mr. *Selwyn's* faculty of repartee is mechanical, and arises more from habit than from genius. It would be a miserable business, indeed, if a man, who had been playing upon words for so many years, should not have attained the faculty of commanding them at his pleasure.

B— — converses with elegance ;
 L— — n is an excellent critic ; and
 many others of the same class may
 be found, who are well qualified to
 be members of a literary club, but
 no farther. *Garrick* is *himself* upon
 the

the stage, and an *actor* every-where else. *Foote* is a mimic every-where ; excellent, delightful, on the theatre and in private society ; but still a mimic. No one can take more pains than Mrs. M— — — to be surrounded with men of wit ; she bribes, she pensions, she flatters, gives excellent dinners, is herself a very sensible woman, and of very pleasing manners ; not young, indeed, but that is out of the question ; ---and, in spite of all these encouragements, which, one would think, might make wits spring out of the ground, the conversations of her house are too often critical and pedantic, --- something between the dulness and the pertness of learning.

ing. They are perfectly chaste, and generally instructive; but a cool and quiet observer would sometimes laugh to see how difficult a matter it is for *la belle Presidente* to give colour and life to her literary circles. It surprizes me that you should leave *Windham* out of your list, who (observe my prophecy) will become one of the ablest men, and shining characters that the latter part of this age will produce. I hazard little in such a *presentiment*; for his talents, judgment, and attainments, will verify it.

The gibes and jests, that are wont to set the table in a roar, promote the chearful purposes of convivial society,

society, but they have nothing to do with that *Attic* conversation which is the highest enjoyment of the human intellect. Wit, believe me, is almost extinct; and I will tell you, among other reasons, why I think so:---because no one seems to have any idea of what wit is, or who deserves the title of it.---To think little, talk of every-thing, and doubt of nothing; to use only the external parts of the soul, and cultivate the surface, as it were, of the judgment; to be happy in expression, to have an agreeable fancy, an easy and refined conversation, and to be able to please, without acquiring esteem; to be born with the equivocal talent of a ready apprehension, and, on that account,

account, to think one's self above reflection ; to fly from object to object, without gaining a perfect knowledge of any ; to gather hastily all the flowers, and never allow the fruit time to arrive at maturity ; all these, collected together, form a faint picture of what the generality of people, in this age, are pleased to honour with the name of Wit.

You must not be angry with me for this long letter, but rather be thankful that it is so short, considering the subject you threw before me, and the desire I have to set you a-thinking on a subject of which you seem to have formed very wrong notions. I again repeat, that true
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Wit is expiring, and great talents also. My words are prophetic, and a few years will determine the matter. It would not be a difficulty to prove the why and the wherefore; but of all subjects, these half metaphysical ones are the most unpleasant to

Yours, &c.

LETTER THE NINETEENTH.

My dear — —,

WITHOUT any violent exertions of my natural vanity, I can easily imagine that the eye of mankind

mankind looks toward my political career; and that, for want of a better subject, there may be some among them who amuse themselves with forming conjectures concerning it. The Ministry have attempted to feel my pulse upon the occasion, but without success; though I will tell you in confidence, that they have nothing, at present, to fear from me. In the great subject of this day's politics, which seems to engulph every other, I am with them. I shall never cease to contend for the universality and unity of the *British Empire* over all its territories and dependencies, in every part of the globe. I have not a doubt of the legislative supremacy
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of Parliament over every part of the British dominions in *America*, the *East* and *West Indies*, in *Africa*, and over *Ireland* itself.

I cannot separate the ideas of Legislation and Taxation ; they seem to be more than twins ; they were not only born, but must co-exist and die together. The question of Right is heard of no more ; it is now become a question of Power ; and it appears to me that the sword will determine the contest. The Colonies pretend to be subject to the King alone ; they deny subordination to the state, and, upon this principle, have not only declared against the authority of Parliament, but erected
a go-

a government of their own, independent of British legislation. To support a disobedience to rights which they once acknowledged, they have already formed associations, armed and arrayed themselves, and are preparing to bring the question to the issue of battle. This being the case, it becomes highly necessary for us to arm also; we must prepare to quench the evil in its infancy, and to extinguish a flame which the natural enemies of *England* will not fail to feed with unremitting fuel, in order to consume our commerce, and tarnish our glory. If wise measures are taken, this business will be soon completed, to the honour of the Mother-Country, and the

the welfare of the Colonies, who, in spite of all the assistance given them by the House of *Bourbon*, must, unless our Government acts like an idiot, be forced to submission.

For my own part, I have not that high opinion of their Roman spirit, as to suppose that it will influence them contentedly to submit to all the horrors of war, to resign every comfort in which they have been bred, to relinquish every hope with which they have been flattered, and retire to the howling wilderness for an habitation; and all for a dream of liberty, which, were they to possess to-morrow, would not give

give them a privilege superior to those which they lately enjoyed, and might, I fear, deprive them of many which they experienced beneath the clement legislation of the British government.

I do not mean to enter at large into the subject ; but, if ministers know what they are about, the matter may be soon decided ; and in every measure which tends to promote such a desirable end, they shall receive all the poor helps I can give them. I will neither sit silent, nor remain inactive ; but if, by neglect, ignorance, or an indecisive spirit, the latter of which I rather suspect from them, they should

should let the monster grow up into size and strength, my support shall be changed into opposition, and all my powers exerted to remove men from a station to which they are unequal.---Remember this assertion,---preserve this letter,---and let it appear in judgment against me, if I err from my present declaration.

I remain yours, &c.

LETTER THE TWENTIETH.

IT was very natural in such a *Strepson* as you are, to imagine that I had hurried away to court

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the nymphs, I mean the wood-nymphs of H— —. Now, I have so little thought about, or regard for these ladies, that I had, at one time, determined to despoil their shade, and make a profitable use of the oaks which shelter them. You will shriek at the idea like any *Hamadryad*; but, in spite of shrieks or entreaties, I had it in contemplation to be patriotic, and give the groves of H— — to the service of my country.

The system of modern gardening, in spite of Fashion and Mr. *Brown*, is a very foolish one. The huddling together every species of building into a park or garden, is ridiculous.

The

The environs of a magnificent house should partake, in some degree, of the necessary formality of the building they surround. This was *Kent's* opinion ; and, where his designs have escaped the destruction of modern refinement, there is an easy grandeur which is at once striking and delightful. Fine woods are beautiful objects, and their beauty approaches nearer to magnificence, as the mass of foliage becomes more visible ; but to dot them with little white edifices, infringes upon their greatness, and, by such divisions and subdivisions, destroys their due effect. The verdure of British swells was not made for Grecian temples : a flock of sheep and a shepherd's hut

are better adapted to it. Our climate is not suited to the deities of *Italy* and *Greece*, and in an hard winter I feel for the shuddering divinities. At H— — there is a *Temple* of *Theseus*, commonly called by the gardener the *Temple* of *Perseus*, which stares you in the face wherever you go; while the *Temple* of *God*, commonly called by the gardener the *Parish-Church*, is so industriously hid by trees from without, that the pious matron can hardly read her prayer-book within. This was an evident preference of strange gods, and, in my opinion, a very blasphemous improvement. — Where Nature is grand, improve her grandeur, not by adding extraneous decorations,

but

but by removing obstructions. Where a scene is, in itself, lovely, very little is necessary to give it all due advantage, especially if it be laid into park, which undergoes no variety of cultivation.

Stow is, in my opinion, a most detestable place; and has in every part of it the air of a *Golgotha*: a princely one I must acknowledge, but in no part of it could I ever lose that gloomy idea. My own park possesses many and very rare beauties; but, from the design of making it classical, it has been charged with many false and unsuitable ornaments. A classical park, or a classical garden, is as ridiculous

an expression as a classical plumb-pudding, or a classical surloin of beef. It is an unworthy action to strip the Classics of their heroes, gods, and goddesses, to grow green amid the fogs of our unclassical climate. But the affectation and nonsense of little minds is beyond description. How many are there, who, fearful that mankind will not discover their knowledge, are continually hanging out the sign of hard words and pedantic expressions, like the late *Lord Orrery*, who, for some classical reason, had given his dog a classical name; it was no less than *Cæsar*! However, *Cæsar*, one day, giving his Lordship a most unclassical bite, he seized a cane, and

and pursued him round the room with great solemnity, and this truly classical menace,—“*Cæsar! Cæsar!*”
 “*if I could catch thee, Cæsar! I*
 “*would give thee as many wounds*
 “*as Brutus gave thy name-sake in*
 “*the Capitol.*” This is the very froth of folly and affectation.

Adieu, &c.

LETTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

My dear Sir,

I OBEY your commands with some reluctance, in relating the story of which you have heard so

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much,

much, and to which your curiosity appears to be so broad awake. I do it unwillingly, because such histories depend so much upon the manner in which they are related; and this, which I have told with such success, and to the midnight terrors of so many simple souls, will make but a sorry figure in a written narration.—However, you shall have it.

It was in the early part of ———'s life that he attended an hunting club at their sport, when a stranger, of a genteel appearance and well mounted, joined the chace, and was observed to ride with a degree of courage and address that
called

called forth the utmost astonishment of every-one present. The beast he rode was of amazing powers ; nothing stopped them ; the hounds could never escape them ; and the huntsman, who was left far behind, swore that the man and his horse were *devils from hell*. When the sport was over, the company invited this extraordinary person to dinner : he accepted the invitation, and astonished the company as much by the powers of his conversation, and the elegance of his manners, as by his equestrian prowess. He was an orator, a poet, a painter, a musician, a lawyer, a divine ; in short, he was every-thing, and the magic of his discourse kept the drowsy sports-
men

men awake long after their usual hour. At length, however, wearied Nature could be charmed no more, and the company began to steal away by degrees to their repose. On his observing the society diminish, he discovered manifest signs of uneasiness: he therefore gave new force to his spirits, and new charms to his conversation, in order to detain the remaining few some time longer. This had some little effect; but the period could not be long delayed when he was to be conducted to his chamber. The remains of the company retired also, but they had scarce closed their eyes, when the house was alarmed by the most terrible shrieks that were ever heard:

several

several persons were awakened by the noise ; but, its continuance being short, they concluded it to proceed from a dog who might be accidentally confined in some part of the house : they very soon, therefore, composed themselves to sleep, and were very soon awakened by shrieks and cries of still greater terror than the former. Alarmed at what they heard, several of them rung their bells, and when the servants came, they declared that the horrid sounds proceeded from the stranger's chamber. Some of the gentlemen immediately arose, to enquire into this extraordinary disturbance ; and, while they were dressing themselves for that purpose, deeper groans of despair,

pair, and shriller shrieks of agony, again astonished and terrified them. After knocking some time at the stranger's chamber-door, he answered them as one awakened from sleep, declared he had heard no noise, and, rather in an angry tone, desired he might not be again disturbed. Upon this they returned to one of their chambers, and had scarce begun to communicate their sentiments to each other, when their conversation was interrupted by a renewal of yells, screams, and shrieks, which, from the horror of them, seemed to issue from the throats of damned and tortured spirits. They immediately followed the sounds, and traced them to the stranger's cham-

chamber, the door of which they instantly burst open, and found him upon his knees in bed, in the act of scourging himself with the most unrelenting severity, his body streaming with blood. On their seizing his hand to stop the strokes, he begged them, in the most wringing tone of voice, as an act of mercy, that they would retire, assuring them that the cause of their disturbance was over, and that in the morning he would acquaint them with the reasons of the terrible cries they had heard, and the melancholy sight they saw. After a repetition of his entreaties, they retired ; and in the morning some of them went to his chamber, but he was not there ;
and,

and, on examining the bed, they found it to be one gore of blood. Upon further enquiry, the groom said, that, as soon as it was light, the gentleman came to the stable booted and spurred, desired his horse might be immediately saddled, and appeared to be extremely impatient till it was done, when he vaulted instantly into his saddle, and rode out of the yard on full speed. — Servants were immediately dispatched into every part of the surrounding country, but not a single trace of him could be found ; such a person had not been seen by any-one, nor has he been since heard of.

The circumstances of this strange story were immediately committed
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to writing, and signed by every-one who were witnesses to them, that the future credibility of any-one, who should think proper to relate them, might be duly supported. Among the subscribers to the truth of this history are some of the first names of this century:—It would now, I believe, be impertinent to add any thing more, than that I am,

Yours, &c.

LETTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

I THANK you most sincerely,
my very dear Friend, for your
obliging congratulations on my late
pro-

promotion ; and I have no better way to answer the friendly counsels which accompany them, but by opening my heart to you upon the occasion, and trusting its sentiments with you.

You knew my father, and I am sure you will applaud me in declaring that his character did real honour to his rank and his nature. A grateful fame will wait upon his memory, till, by some new change in human affairs, the great and good men of this country and period shall be lost to the knowledge of distant generations. In the republic of letters he rose to a very considerable eminence ; his deep political

tical erudition is universally acknowledged ; and, as a senator both of the lower and higher order, his name is honoured with distinguished veneration. In his private as well as public life, he was connected and in friendship with the first men of the times in which he lived ; and, as a character of strict virtue and true piety, he has been universally held forth as the most striking example of this age. The idea of uncommon merit accompanies all opinion of him ; and to mention his name is to awaken the most pleasing and amiable sentiments. As you read this short and imperfect outline of his character, fill it up and do it justice. Now, it will, perhaps,

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surprize you, when you are informed, that the post in government which this great and good man most desired, and could never obtain, was the *Chief Justiceship in Eyre, &c. &c.* The reverse of the picture is as follows: that your humble servant, and his *gracious* son, whose character you perfectly know, has been appointed to this very post, in the infancy of his peerage, without any previous service performed, hint given, or requisition made on his part, and without the proposition of any conditions on the part of the Minister. When I was surprized by the offer, I was surprized also by a sudden and unusual suffusion on my cheeks, at the contrast

contrast of mine and my father's character,—of mine and my father's lot. Indeed, so big was my heart on the occasion, that, when the ministerial ambassador had left me, the sentiments of it burst forth upon the first person I saw, who happened not to be a very proper receptacle for the reflections of virtue.

There is a very great encouragement in this world to be wicked, and the *Devil* certainly goes about in more pleasing shapes than that of *a roaring lion*. In the name of fortune, my dear friend, how and why are these things? Is it the encreasing corruption of the times, or the weakness of government, that

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gives

gives to dissolute men the meed of
 Virtue ; or do ministers think it ex-
 pedient to give a sop to the mas-
 tiff whose growl might make them
 tremble ? You, who have made men
 and manners your study, who have
 looked so deeply into the volume of
 the heart, and have acquired such an
 happy art of reconciling the appa-
 rent inconsistencies of human af-
 fairs, must instruct me. I wish you
 could improve and convert me ! I
 am not insensible to what is good ;
 nay, there are moments when the
 full lustre of virtue beams upon me.
 I try to seize it ; but the gleam es-
 capes me, and I am re-involved in
 darkness. The conflict of reason
 and passion is but the conflict of a
 moment ;

moment; and the latter never fails to bear me off in triumph.

———— *Video meliora proboque,
Deteriora sequor.*

I am, yours most truly, &c.

LETTER THE TWENTY-THIRD.

I WISH the *Morning Post*, and every other Post that scatters such malignant, false, and detestable histories, in the bottomless pit, with its writers, printers, editors, publishers, collectors, and purchasers. To be

the subject of an occasional paragraph is not worth a frown. It is a tax which every-one in high station must pay, be he good, or be he bad, to that *Demon* of Calumny, who now has a temple prepared for his service at every breakfast-table in the metropolis. But, to be the sole theme of a scandalous chronicle, and to see it not only saved from oblivion, but raised into universal notice and reception, from its abusive histories of me, is a circumstance big with every pain and penalty of mortification. To add to my distress, no means of satisfaction or revenge are in my power; and, if resentment were to weave a scourge, and I could use it to my wishes, I
should

should only give new materials to prolong the tale. The business of silent contempt is above me ; and the mode of conduct you recommend is like Saint *Austin's* reason for belief, *quia impossibile est*. I cannot enter an house where the page of my dishonour does not lie upon the table. Every man, who meets me in the street, tells me by his very looks that he has read it. I have overheard my own servants observing upon it, and the very chairmen can repeat its tales. I expect, every day, that my horse, like Balaam's ass, will neigh scandal at me ; not indeed from celestial, but hellish intervention.

Some steps, however, must be

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taken

taken, and some method adopted to silence the cry. To bribe the hounds would produce a mortification almost equal to what I now suffer; but there is no divining how long the story may last, and the *totâ cantabitur urbe* is terrible. Bear it I cannot, and revenge is not in my power. — The rascal keeps within the circle of privilege; and, if he should slip out of it, I am afraid that it would not answer my purpose to avail myself of his incaution. In short, I don't know what to do. You will oblige me more than ever, in forming some wise resolutions for me, and in persuading me to execute them. — Adieu!

LETTER

LETTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

My dear Friend,

YOUR sensibility towards me during my late persecution, is a flattering mark of that affectionate esteem which you have ever borne me. I most sincerely thank you for it ; and have only to wish, that the world knew I still retained so warm a place in your heart. Such a circumstance would serve as an antidote against the poison which has been instilled into the minds of mankind on my subject. The batteries of Scandal are at length turned from me ; and some new object of their rage will, I hope, make their thundering attack upon me to be quickly forgotten.

I love ^

I love my country, its constitution, and its privileges, too well to say, write, or even think any-thing against that palladium of British freedom, the Liberty of the Press, though I have been such a sufferer by it. While it remains, (and may it ever remain !) the people of England will have a security for those privileges which give them a superiority over every other nation. Perhaps the enormities of private scandal should be checked, at the same time that, I think, it would be dangerous to suffer even an excrescence of any staple privilege to be cut off. The track of innovation widens every moment ; and on this example, if it was once opened, there is no saying where it would end.

A Priest,

A Priest, I think, is said to have invented Gunpowder ; and a Soldier has the credit of first suggesting the art of Printing : and I have heard wonderfully curious and profound observations made upon the strange combination of the inventors and their inventions. But, surely, it does not require a moment's reflection to discover that this improvement in the business of war, as well as in the republic of letters, could not have proceeded so naturally from any other characters. It is, I believe, universally allowed, that, since the introduction of artillery and fire-arms, the trade of war is become comparatively innocent : Slaughter no longer wades knee-deep in blood ;
and

and her sword is now no sooner drawn than it is satisfied. A discovery, therefore, which has lessened the carnage and horrors of battle, was most naturally produced by a Minister of the Gospel of Peace. On the contrary, we have only to examine of letters since the invention of Printing, and lo ! what an host of polemical writers appear, armed with the most bitter spirit of malice and resentment ! What feuds, both national and domestic, have arisen from it ! What rage has been enflamed ! How many wars have been engendered ! What disgraceful, inflammatory, and unchristian controversies maintained ; how many scandals of every kind have been propagated,

gated, and what passions have been incited by it! &c. &c. so that the most free governments have been obliged to enact laws to restrain and controul it. Such an invention, therefore, may be said to proceed, in its natural course, from one whose profession is founded in the animosities, injustice, and malevolence of mankind. I doubt not but you will now agree with me, that the world is, as it ought to be, more indebted to the priest than the foldier. You will tell me, perhaps, that this argument arises from the smarting of my wounds, which are not yet skinned over: I feel myself of a contrary opinion; but I will quit the subject till not a scar remains, when I shall
take

take the opportunity of some tranquil hour to bring the matter, by your leave, into debate with you. I remain, with great regard, &c.

LETTER THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

My dear — — —,

I Must acknowledge, notwithstanding I am treated with some degree of civility in it, that the Dedication you mention is a wretched business, and disgraces the volume to which it is prefixed. You wonder I did not write a better for him myself ;

myself; and I would, most assuredly, have done it, but, among many excellent qualities which this dedicator possesses, he is a blab of the first delivery, and I dared not venture to trust him.

The testamentary arrangement which appointed him to the honourable labours of an editor, took its rise from three motives: first, to mark a degree of parental resentment against an ungracious son;—secondly, from an opinion that a gracious nephew's well-timed flatteries had created of his own understanding;—and, thirdly, from a design of bestowing upon this self-same gracious nephew a legacy of honour
from

from the publication, and of profit from the sale of the volume. He is as proud of the business as a new-made Knight of his title, is never easy but when he is receiving incense from booksellers and their journeymen, and loves to be pointed at as a child of science. I wish he may be contented with his present celebrity; though, if I know him aright, this editorial business will awaken ideas of his having talents for a superior character, and that he is qualified to publish his own works with as much eclat as he has done those of another. If he attempts to climb the ladder of ambition in any, but particularly in a literary way, he must fall. I have counselled him to be content;

content ; and the booby gives it out that I am envious of his reputation. Poor, silly fool ! I only wish the daw may keep the one poor feather he has got ; for, if he attempts any addition to his plumage, the vanity will draw him into a scrape, in which he will be stripped as bare as Nature made him.

But, to change my subject to a coxcomb of another sex : Mrs. — — — has done what she has no right to do, and has said what she is not authorised to say. It is not in the power even of so able and so respectable an advocate as yourself to work up any-thing that has the semblance of a satisfactory justification.

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tion. Your arguments, which are so powerful in the cause of truth, are the slightest of all cobwebs in support, or, I should rather say, in palliation of falsehood. This, among other things, is much to your honour, and I congratulate your disqualification to plead a bad cause. If you have been a volunteer on the occasion, I compliment your gallantry ; if you have been influenced by the Lady's request, I admire your ready friendship. You have every merit with me ; and, to give you the satisfaction you so well deserve, I cannot but authorise you to set the dame at rest, and to hush her every fear. This is no small sacrifice ; for I have the most ample means of vengeance

geance in my hands: and, if it will advance your interests at her court, you have full permission to declare that my wrath has been averted by your interposition.

——— *Nullum memorabile nomen
Fæmineâ in pœnâ est, nec habet Victoria
laudem.*

I remain, very truly, &c. &c.

LETTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH.


YOU have won both your wagers.—In speaking of the inhabitants of *China*, I do make use

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of

of the word *Gbineses* ; and I borrow the term from *Milton*. As to your first bet, that I used such an expression, your ears, I trust, will be grateful for the confidence you had in them. But your second wager, that, if I did use it, I had a good authority, is very flattering to myself ; and I thank you for the opinion you entertain of the accuracy of my language. My memory will not, at this moment, direct you to the page ; but you will readily find the word in the Index of *Newton's* edition of *Milton*.

Of all the poets that have graced ancient times, or delighted the latter ages, *Milton* is my favourite ; I think
him



him superior to every other, and the writer of all others the best calculated to elevate the mind to form a nobleness of taste, and to teach a bold, commanding, energetic language. I read him with delight as soon as I could read him at all ; and, I remember, in my father's words, I gave the first token of premature abilities in the perusal of the *Paradise Lost*. I was quite a boy, when, in reading that poem, I was so forcibly struck with a passage, that I laid down the book with some violence on the table, and took an hasty turn to the other end of the room. Upon explaining the cause of this emotion to my father, he seized, clasped me in his arms, smothered

mer is a great man ; *Ciceronian*, but, I should think, inferior to *Cicero*. The latter is a greater man ; *Demosthenian*, but superior to *Demosthenes*. The first formed himself on the model of the great Roman orator ; he studied, translated, rehearsed, and acted his Orations : the second disdained imitation, and was himself a model of eloquence, of which no idea can be formed but by those who have seen and heard him. His words have sometimes frozen my young blood into stagnation, and sometimes made it pace in such an hurry through my veins, that I could scarce support it. He, however, embellished his ideas by classical amusements, and occasionally read

— the sermons of *Barrow*, which he considered as a mine of nervous expressions: but, not content to correct and instruct his imagination by the works of mortal men, he borrowed his noblest images from the language of inspiration. Mr. *Edmund Burke* also gives an happy dignity to parts of his speeches; a want of which is, in general, their only defect, by the application of scriptural expressions.

Though I have such bright and venerable examples before my eyes, I pursue a somewhat different, but not an opposite track; for *Milton*, from the excellence and form of his works, has every claim to the title
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of a *classic*: from the nature also of his principal subjects, which are drawn from scripture, we may be said, in some degree, to read the sacred writings when his great poetical Commentary of them (for so I shall call his *Paradise Lost* and *Regained*) is the object of our studies.---The Orations of *Cicero*, notwithstanding their character in the world, please, but do not inflame me. We are at too great a distance from the period, and have not a sufficient idea of the manner of their delivery, to be affected by them. They are very fine compositions; and it is the evidence of their being compositions that is their chief fault: and if *Lord Mansfield* were to pronounce the
best

best of them, in his best manner, I doubt much of their supposed effect. They chill the warmth of my feelings; and I have often essayed, but in vain, to work up in me an elevation of mind and spirits from a repetition of the Roman Orations. I must acknowledge that *Lord Bolingbroke*, a great and splendid authority, is against me, who, in language more animating than I could ever find in *Tully's* eloquence, declares that no man who has a soul can read his Orations, after the revolutions of so many ages, after the extinction of the governments, and of the people for whom they were composed, without feeling at this hour the passions they were designed to

to move, and the spirit they were designed to raise. If this be true, in his Lordship's sense of the expression, I have no soul: but I suspect the truth of this assertion, as I well know that he would, at any time, sacrifice a just criticism to a fine period, and truth itself to a brilliant passage. His character and genius were both intemperate; and, when his tongue or his pen were pleased with their subjects, he was borne rapidly on by the stream of eloquence, nor considering or caring whither he went. When his imagination was once kindled, it was an equal chance whether he obscured Virtue, or dignified Vice. The source of his delusive writings was
an

an headstrong, vivid fancy, which practised as great deceits upon himself, as he had ever done upon mankind.—But to return to my subject :

For the life of me, I cannot read Sermons even with Lord *Chatbam* ; and my hands are too unhallowed to unfold the Sacred Volume: but I find in *Milton's* Poems every-thing that is sublime in thought, beautiful in imagery, and energetic in language and expression. To attain a reputation for eloquence is my aim and my ambition ; and, if I should acquire the art of cloathing my thoughts in happy language, adorning them with striking images, or enforcing them by commanding words,

words, I shall be indebted for such advantages to the study of our great British classic.

I know you would not recommend my friends, the Poets, to take a leading part in the study of eloquence. You may, probably, apprehend that poetical pursuits would be apt to give too poetical a turn to discourse as well as writing; and to beget a greater attention to sound than to sense. Such an idea is certainly founded in truth; and your objections are perfectly sensible, when an application to the Poets is not conducted with judgment, and moderated by prosaic reading and exercises. — A little circumstance in point,

point, which just occurs to me, will make you smile: When my father had completed the first copy of his History, the friends to whom he sent it for their criticism and correction, universally agreed in its being written in a kind of irregular blank verse, from the beginning to the end. He was much surprized at the information; but, on examining his work, he found it to be true, and gave to the whole the excellent dress it now wears. Sir Robert R—— was so unfair as to impress some of the passages upon his memory, and has since been so ill-natured as to repeat them.—But to put a period to this long letter, I declare myself to be very angry, when
you

you are but twenty miles from me, that you should not put your horses to your chaise, and be here in a shorter space of time than is necessary to fill up half a sheet of paper. You will do well to come and amuse yourself here, leaving gouty uncles and croaking aunts to themselves. There is more vivacity concentrated in my little dell, than is to be found in all the ample sweeps of your vale. As you are musical, I will prepare a syren to sing to you, and you shall accompany her in any manner you please. Adieu !

Yours, most truly, &c.

LETTER

LETTER THE TWENTY - SEVENTH.

I CANNOT yet fancy the suspected preliminaries of alliance between *France* and *America*; and I will tell you why: because I think it will not be the mutual interest of either of them to engage in such a treaty. The French finances are not in a state to justify the risking a war with England, which an open alliance with America must immediately produce. *Monsieur de Mau-poux*, and *Monsieur de Necker*, if I am rightly informed, are of the same opinion, and, I believe, from nobler

nobler motives and better reasons, are in opposition to those proposals which the *Americans* are said to have offered to induce France to give an avowed support to their cause. My information goes somewhat farther, and assures me, that the opinions of the two statesmen already mentioned are supported by all the graver men and old officers in that kingdom. *America*, at present, makes a very powerful and extraordinary resistance, and there seems to be a spirit awakened in her people, which will woefully prolong the period of her reduction. The contest is, at present, between a child forced into resistance by what it calls tyranny, and a parent enraged at filial ingratitude,

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titude, who is resolved to reclaim
 his offspring by force and chastise-
 ment. In such a state, though a
 mad spirit of rebellion may instigate
 revolted children to act against the
 parent, and the brethren of the
 house of their parent, the latter will
 go very reluctantly to the business of
 bloodshed ; and many a brave man
 will consider the duty of the soldier
 and the citizen as incompatible, and
 let the former sink into the latter.
 But the moment that *America* flies
 for protection to the arms of *France*,
 the case will be changed : every tie
 of consanguinity will be then bro-
 ken ; it will be impossible to distin-
 guish between them and their allies ;
 they will be all the object of one
 com-

common resentment ; and the *Americans* must expect, as they will surely find, an equal exertion against them as will be employed against their insidious supporters.

But this is not the only reason why I think *America* will maintain the contest better without the open support of *France* ; I have another, in the natural aversion they bear to each other. No two civilized nations, in the same quarter of the globe, can bear a more different and clashing character than *France* and the revolted Colonies. Fire and water would as soon blend their opposite elements, as the solemn, gloomy, unpolished *American*, with the gay, sprightly,

sprightly, animated *Frenchman*. Besides, how will it be possible for the simple, fullen leaven of *Calvinism* to be kneaded in the same lump with the motley genius and complicated ceremony of Popery. While the hope for Independence keeps alive the spirit of contention, such considerations, if suggested at all, will, for a time, give way to their ambition ; but, should the object of it be attained, they would arise, on the first interval of repose, in all the bitterness of disunion, and bring on a scene of internal confusion, big with greater horrors than they now experience. What will these deluded people think, and how will they act, who, after manifesting such a solemn

solemn and bold averſion to the power of a Proteſtant biſhop, after having held forth the act of parliament which gave to the conquered inhabitants of Canada a toleration of their religion, as one of their juſtifications to rebellion ; I repeat again, what will be the conduct of theſe people, when they ſee the croſs adored in their ſtreets, and hear the benedictions and anathemas of Rome pronounced in their cities !

For my own part, I cannot conceive ſuch an event as *American* Independence ; and, in my poor opinion, if it were to be given them to-morrow, it would, in the end, prove a worſe preſent than the *Stamp*

~~All~~ itself, with all its aggravated horrors. The Guards are ordered to cross the *Atlantic*, and — along with them. I am glad you like him; I thought my prophecy in that particular would be fulfilled. You knew *Madame*, I think, at *Geneva*. They both possess the same disposition to give a pleasant turn to every thing. They put their son to board *chez un Bourgeois de Dijon*, and have never since troubled themselves about the boy, or the pension stipulated for his support. Luckily for the child, the man to whose care he was entrusted has taken a fancy to him, and declares, if he should be deserted by his parents, that he will do his best to provide
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for him ; and our friends think it the best joke in the world.

I have been to see the *Justitia* hulk, where, among many other miserables, I saw poor *Dignam* wear the habit of a slave. He seemed disposed to speak to me ; but I had previously desired the superintendent to request him, since it was not in my power to do him service, to wave all appearance of his having known me. This mode of punishment offers a very shocking spectacle ; and, I think, must undergo some alleviation, if it be not entirely abolished. If it were to come again before parliament, I should give the subject a very serious consideration,

and the measure a very serious opposition. Is it not extraordinary, that the first public exhibition of slavery in this kingdom, for so it is, however the situation may be qualified by law, should be suggested by a Scotchman, and that the first regulator of this miserable business should be from the same country? I do not mean to throw out any unpleasant ideas concerning any-one whose lot it was to be born on the other side of the *Tweed*, but merely to state a fact for your observation. I have known many of my northern fellow-subjects, and esteemed them. *David Hume* possesses my sincere admiration; but though the object of his writings

was

was to remove prejudices, he himself possessed the strongest in favour of his country, and was, as is the great weakness of Scotchmen, so jealous of its honour, that I gave him great offence, at Lord *Hertford's*, at *Razley*, by asking him at what time of the year the harvest was housed in *Scotland*. My question arose from an innocent desire of being satisfied in that particular ; but he conceived it to convey a suspicion, that there was no harvest, or at least no barns in his country ; and his answer was slight and churlish.—
 Fare you well ! If you hear anything on the Continent that at all concerns the present state of public affairs, I beg you will not fail to favour

your me with the most early communication.

I am, with great sincerity, &c.

LETTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

My dear — — —,

I CANNOT assert it as a matter within my own knowledge ; but I have some reason to believe, that the late *Earl of Bath*, at the close of life, manifested a kind of preference of the *French* to the *English* government. Upon what principles

ples such an opinion was grounded,
 I cannot pretend to say: it is im-
 possible he could form it in the
 abstract; it must arise, therefore,
 from pride of heart, degrading
 sentiments of mankind, a natural
 love of power, or from some of
 those selfish motives which grow
 more strong and prevalent as men
 approach the end of their days.
 In short, the French government
 might be more suitable to his cha-
 racter and dispositions; and, though
 this conjecture is not in his favour,
 I believe it to have a foundation in
 truth. It is a common case among
 mankind, where reason and judg-
 ment are perverted by the strength
 of habitual inclination. I will give
 you

you an example that shall please you.

No one of common understanding, and who has the least idea of human affairs, or knowledge of human nature, after a comparative examination of the *Gospel* and the *Alcoran*, will not give to the former a most instant, decided, and universal preference. He will admire the rational and amiable doctrines of the one, and as readily acknowledge the absurdities of the other. Nevertheless, there are men of sense, I know some of them, and so do you, my friend, who would so far yield to the warm desire of habitual gratification, as to give their
imme-

immediate consent to exchange Christianity for the religion of *Mahomet*. *Lord Bath* must have been indebted for the opinions given to him, to the triumph of an irrational self-love over a rational love of mankind: perhaps, to the imbecility of his social affections may be added the strange caprices of disappointed dotage.

I have either read or heard an assertion, that it is impossible to find upon earth a society of men who govern themselves upon principles of humanity: and I am forced to acknowledge, that the opinion will find a very powerful support in the customs of almost every country in

in the world. Whoever will consider with attention the histories of mankind, and examine, with an impartial eye, the conduct of different nations, will be soon convinced, that, except those duties which are absolutely necessary to the preservation of the human species, he cannot name any principle of morals, nor imagine any rule of virtue, which, in some part or other of the world, is not directly contradicted by the general practice of entire societies. The most polished nations have supposed, that they had an equal right to expose their children, as to bring them into the world. There are countries now existing, where the child feels it as
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an high act of filial duty to desert or murder their parents, when they can no longer contribute to their own support. *Garcilasso de la Vega* relates, that certain people of *Peru* make concubines of their female prisoners of war, nourish and carefully feed the children they have by them, on which they afterwards feast. But this is not all; when the wretched mother can no longer furnish the delicacies of their horrid banquets from her womb, she shares the fate of her offspring, and becomes the meal of the Barbarians, whose throats have been moistened with the blood of her children.

It

It would be a matter of very little difficulty to fill a volume with the various inhumanities which mingle with the governments of the *Asian*, *African*, and savage *American* nations of this day. The historians, also, of ancient times, would greatly increase the sad history of human calamity: nor is the quarter of the world which we inhabit exempted from furnishing its quota to the miserable account. The various customs, religions, and governments, which divide more enlightened *Europe*, might furnish a multitude of actions, less barbarous, indeed, in their appearance, but as reprehensible in reality, and

as

as dangerous in their consequences,
as those already recited.

England, however, has this advantage over the rest of her neighbour kingdoms, that the examples of inhumanity which she has produced have arisen from an audacious abuse of her laws; while those of other nations seem to arise from the nature of their constitutions. A code of such wise, rational, and humane legislation never was known in the world, as that which prescribes the rule of conduct, as well to the governors as to the governed, in our kingdom. The principles of it are founded in the perfection of human reason, and, in a certain
O, degree,

degree, on that happy union of justice and mercy which Divines have given to the decrees of Omnipotence. But my paper admonishes me to quit this interesting subject, or it will not leave me a space sufficient to assure you with what real regard I am,

Yours, &c.

LETTER THE TWENTY-NINTH.

THE first article of your letter, which tells me of ———
———'s death, has very much affected

fectured me ; and if it had arrived three hours sooner, I would have set off for London, to have dissipated the grave thoughts it occasions. I can hardly give credit to your account of her last moments : she had much to regret ; rank, fortune, friends, and beauty, which, *Saint Evremond* says, a woman parts with more reluctantly than even life itself. By this time, I trust, she has reached the Elysian Fields, and, with the blest inhabitants of that delightful abode,

*On flowers repos'd, and with fresh garlands
crown'd,*

Quaffs immortality and joy. —

However that may be, the event of her death is very sensibly felt by me. I shall miss her very much; not indeed as an acquaintance; for she would admit me only to her public assemblies; but as an object of respect: and truly sorry am I that she is gone, for the sake of her sex, as she has not left one behind who can supply her place in my good opinion. I had a sort of occasional respect for every woman on her account, which I fear will be buried in her grave.---She had nothing of female inconsistency about her, and every-thing of female delicacy. She conversed with the understanding of a man, but with the grace and elegance of her
own

own sex. Her sentiments, language, and manners, were, like her own frame, in the image of man, but possessing every attraction of female nature. I will tell you a secret; she was the only woman who ever made me blush, and she once dyed my cheeks with such a crimson flame, that I feel them glow at this distant moment.

* * * * *

To maintain the qualities of goodness, tenderness, affection, and sincerity, in the several offices of life, to disdain ambition, avarice, luxury, and wantonness, and to avoid affectation, folly, childishness, and levity, is the consummation of a female character, and was fully accomplished by the lovely woman who is no more. She little thought, I believe, that it would be an employment of mine to pen her eulogium; and you smile, I suppose, at my pretensions to describe female perfection. To tell you the truth, I strained very hard to produce the foregoing period. My brain had a severe labour of it, and suffered no small pains in the delivery. However,

ever, I now recommend the pious bantling to your care ; and, I think, the midwife and the nurse will not contest the business of superior qualifications.

I put an end to the pleasure of my acquaintance with — — — at the *Duke of Bolton's* masquerade at *Hackwood*, some years ago, by what I thought a little simple love-making, but which she thought impudence ; and she has never suffered me to approach her since that time, but upon the most distant footing. You may know, perhaps, that I have got a terrible character for this self-same vice of effrontery, and, I am afraid, not without some little reason. It is, upon the whole, an

O 4, impru-

imprudent mode of proceeding ; and, though attended with more success than modest people may imagine, as you well know, never has a prosperous conclusion. One failure tacks a miserable epithet to one's name for ever. In military operations, the attack by storm sometimes effects great matters ; but, on such a design, a repulse is sometimes fatal, and always attended with much loss and bloodshed. This has been the case with me in fields less glorious, but far more delightful, than those of *Mars*.

The arrival of news-papers has caused a short interruption to my writing ; and they acquaint me with a circumstance which you have omitted

omitted, that she died in child-bed. It was a custom, as I have read, among some of the antient nations, to bury the infant alive with the mother whose death it had occasioned. I shudder at the idea; nevertheless, in this particular instance, I am disposed to vote all my malice to the brat which has deprived the world of so bright an ornament. Adieu!—Shall I pay a compliment to your penetration, in supposing that you will perceive how tardily my pen has proceeded to the bottom of the page? But this is literally the fact. The French proverb says, *On ne parle jamais de bonne foi, quand on parle mal des femmes.*—I apprehended

prehended you would be unlucky enough to reverse the sentiment, and apply it to,

Yours, &c.

LETTER THE THIRTIETH.

WE all of us grew suddenly tired of our *Wiltshire* rustication; and, without a dissentient voice, voted a party to *Bristol*, where I eat such excellent turtle, and drank such execrable wine, that, with the heat of the weather into the bargain, I was suddenly taken
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ill at the play-house, almost to fainting, and was obliged to hurry into the air for respiration. Believe me, I did not like the business. Cold sweats and shiverings, accompanied with internal sinkings, gave me a better notion of dying than I had before, and made me think so seriously of this mortal life, that, on my return home, I shall take the opportunity of the first gloomy day to make my will, appoint executors, and harangue my lawyer into low spirits on the doctrine of death and judgment.

I exhibited myself, for none of the party would accompany me, at a public breakfast at the *Hot Wells*,
and

and sat down at a long table with a number of animated cadavers, who devoured their meal as if they had not an hour to live ; and, indeed, many of them seemed to be in that doleful predicament. But this was not all. I saw three or four groups of hectic spectres engage in cotillions : it brought instantly to my mind *Holbein's Dance of Death* ; and methought I saw the raw-boned scare-crow piping and tabouring to his victims. — So I proceeded to the fountain ; but, instead of rosy, blooming health, diseases of every colour and complexion guarded the springs. As I approached to taste them, I was fanned by the foetid breath of gasping consumptions, stunned with
 expiring

expiring coughs, and suffocated with the effluvia of ulcerated lungs. — Such a living *Golgotha* never entered into my conceptions; and I could not but look upon the stupendous rocks, that rise in rude magnificence around the place, as the wide-spreading jaws of an universal sepulchre.

Lord *Walpole* told me he was there in attendance upon a daughter. — I was glad to turn my back upon the scene, but I had not yet come to the conclusion of it; for, as I was waiting for my chaise, two different persons put cards into my hand, which informed me where funerals were to be furnished with
the

the greatest expedition, and that hearses and mourning-coaches were to let to any part of England. I immediately leaped into my carriage, and ordered the postilion to drive with all possible haste from a place where I was in danger of being buried alive.

After all, this tenancy of life is but a bad one, with its waste and ingress of torturing diseases; which, not content with destroying the building, maliciously torture the possessor with such pains and penalties, as to make him oftentimes curse the possession.

Man's

*Man's feeble race what ills await !
 Labour and penury, —the racks of pain ;
 Disease and Sorrow's mournful train,
 And Death, sad refuge from the storms of Fate.*

If I continue this kind of letter any further, you will tell me that I shall repent, found hospitals, and die a Methodist; and that *Rocheſter's* Funeral - Sermon and mine will be bound up in the ſame volume, to the edification and comfort of all ſinners of every enormity. Adieu, therefore, and believe me very truly

Yours, &c.

LETTER

LETTER THE THIRTY-FIRST.

I NEITHER hunt nor shoot : the former is a diversion which requires certain sacrifices that I cannot grant, and shall not enumerate ; the latter suits me better, but is as little pursued as the other. The business and form, not to say tyranny, of preserving game, which is necessary to establish a certainty of sport, is not to my way of thinking. The laws concerning game form a very unconstitutional monopoly : but that is not all ; the peace and society of provincial vicinities are
more

more or less disturbed, by jealousies and disputes arising from the game, in every part of the kingdom. My country employments are better than you imagine. I am reading, with great care and observation, the works of the Chancellor *D'Aguesseau* of *France*. Many years ago, my father gave a volume of them to me, desiring me to study it with attention, and consider the contents as his own paternal counsels. At that time I did neither one nor the other ; however, I am now making ample amends for former neglect. The magistrate, the statesman, the lawyer, the man of the world, the orator, and the philosopher, will find delight and instruction

in these volumes. I can say no more; and what I have now said will add them to your library, if it does not already possess them.

You must know that I am angry with you for writing to me, or, rather, for not coming, instead of writing. Delay not to visit a place you so much admire, and to see a friend who loves and values you. We will study together in the morning, and court the Muses in the evening; and you shall visit *Pope's* urn by moon-light, and I will promise not to laugh at you. I propose to remain here a fortnight longer; but, if you will come to me, the time of my

my departure shall be prolonged to
your pleasure. I am, with real re-
gard,

Your most faithful, &c.

LETTER THE THIRTY-SECOND.

My Lord,

IN obedience to your Lordship's
commands, I have left no place
unsearched, and have ordered every
possible inquiry to be made after
the manuscript which my father
read to you a short time before his
death ; but in vain. As he had de-

terminated upon a republication of his Miscellaneous Works, with the addition of some pieces which had never been printed ; I imagine he was cautious about preserving any papers or compositions that were not in his opinion sufficiently prepared for the press, lest the partiality of his surviving friends might give them to the world.

I am apprehensive, my Lord, that the manuscript in question shared the fate of many others which he had not an inclination to finish, and did not chuse to leave in an unfinished state. However, in my search, I found three or four large sheets of paper, in a folio volume, which

which appear to contain extracts from the memoirs of the great men of the last and present centuries, and were probably some of the rude materials that formed the biographical sketches which your Lordship so much admired, and whose loss, on that account, gives me so much concern. These papers contain little more than scraps of characters. The principal object of them seems to be the *Duke de Vitri*, Ambassador Plenipotentiary from the French King, for the peace of *Nimeguen*; but it is impossible to form out of them any satisfactory account of that able negociator. That my letter, however, may not be entirely without amusement, I shall add a couple

couple of quotations, which I have found among the rest, from the characters of very figuring personages on the theatre of *Europe*. I call them quotations, as they are written in Italian, though I cannot name the author from whence they are taken, and are immediately followed by the character of *Petronius*, from the *Annals of Tacitus*. — The first of them relates to *Cardinal Mazarin*, and the second to *Oliver Cromwell*. I shall make no apology to your Lordship for their language, as I have been informed that you understand it equally well with your own. I am, my Lord,

With great respect

And obligation, &c.

Car-

Cardinal Mazarin.

*MOLTO la natura, non poco l'arte,
tutto gli contribui la fortuna, che sup-
pli con la dignità à ciò che mancò ne'
natali. Egli haveva bella e grata
presenza, faccia lieta & amabile, occhi
vivaci, gratia e decoro ugualmente se-
parlava, o taceva.---Più che fino e ca-
pace in simular l'intentioni, e dissimu-
lare gli affetti. La fortuna lo sos-
tennè ad ogni passo, e se pur alcuna
volta les pose al timor & al pericolo,
non fù che per animarlo, e per trarnelo
con maggiore trionfo.*

Cromwell.

*HUOMO grande ne i vitii, è nelle
virtù, che nel' arbitrio di licentiosa for-
tuna*

*tuna visse con mirabile continenza,
sobrio, casto, modesto, vigilante, inde-
fesso, ma da estrema ambitione agitato,
appena potè satiarfi col sangue del Rè,
e coll' oppressione del regno.*

T H E E N D.

8 APR 67

